

FASHIONABLE
INVOLVEMENTS:

A
NOVEL.

MRS. MINNIE GUNNING. *afterwards*
K

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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Second Edition.
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IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. I.

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Fashionable Involvements.

CHAP. I.

TÊTE-À-TÊTE.

THE most fashionable couple about town being prevented from sleeping by some domestic crotchets running in their heads, of which they wished to divest themselves, accidentally met in the breakfast-room at an unusual early hour, it being not one o'clock. Yes, Reader, it was really no more than one hour after mid-day! No wonder then that they should start at the sight of each other as if they had

seen a spectre, as they issued from their separate apartments ; but politeness very soon obtained a complete victory over surprize ; all the enquiries possible were mutually made with such perfect good breeding, as shewed they wanted nothing in the world but sincerity to make them pass for affectionate solicitude.

Lady Isleworth carried a smile on her face and a scroll of paper in her hand, which laying carelessly on the table, she prepared to fill out the tea.

Sir Frederick took up a newspaper, but his eyes often reverted with a glance of suspicion towards the manuscript he saw lying by the side of his lady, the subject of which he probably guessed, therefore asked no questions, but said, in a dissatisfied tone, " Where are the girls ?—I am surprized, Lady Isleworth, *you* give yourself the trouble of doing these sort of dull offices, when



when you have so many daughters who may take them off your hands."

"O, my dear," returned her Ladyship, "you have surely forgot that we have none of them at home, except the two young ones, who, I suppose, are at their lessons; and Miss Isleworth did not go to bed till six this morning, of course we must not expect to see her till dinner time:—I wish the poor thing may not be in a decline; she looks frightfully pale; and as soon as the town thins, it will be proper, I think, to send her into the country, that she may get up her sleep, and by that means recover her complexion."

"But, if you suppose the change of air so necessary to the restoration of her health, why wait till the town thins? why not put your design in execution immediately?"

“ Oh! for Heaven’s sake, do not mention such a proposition; it would absolutely kill her at once; yes, it would be her death; there is suffocation in the very thoughts of the country at this season of the year. You see she is yet capable of a *great* deal; she has not been in bed any night this three weeks, at the earliest hour, till three in the morning. I did not mean to alarm you by saying she looked pale; I hardly know how I came to make the observation, only that I think it odious to be without colour; if she would put on rouge there might be no occasion for her going into the country at all; but she is so refractory to my commands, when I bid her try the experiment, that she positively *shall* go there one day or other, as she deserves to be punished for her disobedience.”

The whole time her Ladyship had been delivering this maternal harangue, the half negligent,

negligent, half oppressed Baronet, seemed to be more plunged in silent meditation, than devoting his attention either to the matter or the subject of her eloquence—a momentary pause ensued, when, suddenly starting from his reverie, he cried out—"Pray, my dear, do you never intend to visit Mrs. Snug?"

"Mrs. Snug!" repeated his Lady, with a strongish sort of emphasis, "how, in the name of wonder, has her idea intruded on our family affairs?"

"Family affairs!—Oh, yes, true, child, we were talking of family affairs; and now that you have renewed the subject, I must tell you that they are in a d—d bad condition."

"How can *that* be possible!—Do you really admire this grave sort of jesting?—For my part, I have not cleverness enough

to understand it—however, do not let us dwindle into the *disagreeables*. You was talking of Mrs. Snug; she is a mighty pretty kind of a woman; I wonder she has never been at any of my parties; for, indeed, and indeed, I sent my name and my days to her house, when you first hinted it to me that you had entered into a sort—of a sort—of a *friendly* intimacy with her husband.”

A smile of encouragement emboldened Sir Frederick to request the invitation might be repeated, being convinced that by some negligence or other her former compliment never reached the hand of Mrs. Snug, as he had heard her declare very lately there was *no* person in the world whose acquaintance she was so ambitious of attaining as that of Lady Isleworth.

CHAP. II.

TÊTE-À-TÊTE CONTINUED.

ANOTHER full pause, apparently important to both parties, immediately followed the Baronet's eager entreaties, and the Lady's *cheerful* acquiescence; yet this silence was not at last interrupted by any observation that seemed the effect of consideration.—“I am thinking,” said the former, “that you are a dear delightful creature, the most obliging wife in the universe; and what a loss the world *must* sustain, if my cursed involvements should force me to withdraw you from the participation of its elegant pleasures?”

“And I am thinking,” retorted his fairer and better half, “that you are enough to
B 4 give

give one the vapours; I hate to talk with you when you get you into a philosophical humour—Can't you let your involvements alone to disentangle themselves?—Did you ever know a man of six thousand a year that *does*, or *ought* to trouble himself about his involvements?"

"Faith, that is a rational conceit; but, nevertheless, I tell you, Madam, we are ruined."

"Ruined with six thousand a year!—Pish! you are now perfectly provoking."

"Six thousand a year has a good sound, but when five of them are sunk in annuities can you tell me how a man is to make up the deficiency?"

"Lord, Sir Frederick! you talk very nonsensically; nothing is more easy! Why don't you get Arthur to cut off the entail?"

tail? he is a fine spirited youth, and I dare say will do it with a great deal of pleasure."

"I shall certainly try him, my dear," said the Baronet; "but, in the mean time, would it not be as well, if you was to give up your jointure? I think that would help us a little."

"Take it then, by all means," replied her good-natured ladyship; "you have only to get the consent of my trustees, and mine follows of course."

"What an angel!" exclaimed the transported husband, kissing her hands with well-affected rapture; "you have set the vessel right again; and there will be no immediate necessity of speaking to Arthur about the entail: we may keep that in reserve, at least until we can no longer con-

trive to go on without his assistance. I will see Bateman and Curry this very morning, and send them both to the devil, if they hesitate an instant in giving up their trust to your settlement."

"As to Curry," replied her ladyship, "it requires some address to manage that old fogram; you know, he took it into his head to be affronted when I forbid him the house, because the fool would give his advice unasked. However, I am glad to see your spirits getting above par. But remember, Sir Frederick, when my dirty acres are converted into cash, that *wives*, as well as *husbands*, have their little *fashionable* occasions. Here is a list," taking up the paper, which till now had remained quietly on the table, where she had laid it on her first entrance; "you had better look it over, my dear, and you will find the articles contained in these memorandums to be
mere

mere *necessaries*, which I cannot *possibly* do without: the purchase of them, as near as I can guess, from expenditures of the same nature, will rather exceed fifteen hundred pounds, and a compliment of two thousand will leave me very much your debtor."

Now, as the necessities of a lady of tone would not be universally understood by all classes of readers, though we were even to produce this list of memorandums, plainly as they were there made out, so we shall no more unfold the mystical paper that contained them than did Sir Frederick, who, returning it unopened, politely assured her ladyship, whatever part of the money she appropriated to her own use would receive a double value in his estimation.

Parting in the most undefinable harmony, they appointed to meet again half an hour before Lady Isleworth's company

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B 6

assembled,

assembled, to talk over his success with her two trustees, though he appeared quite certain they could form no objection to an arrangement so well digested, and so *excessively* reasonable.

CHAP. III.

LOVE AND MARRIAGE.

LADY ISLEWORTH, at fourteen, was a romp—at fifteen, a wife—and at sixteen, a mother; which is all the apology we are at present inclined to make for having introduced her at the age of thirty-seven, the dissipated mistress of an almost ruined family. Her other qualifications will unfold themselves as occasion shall offer.

Sir Frederick could boast no greater advantage over his lady, but that of being in age four years her senior; of which preference, if it may be so called, the incoherence of all his pursuits spoke him totally insensible. Whilst children themselves, they were the parents of children,
which

which at first they considered merely as play-things; but afterwards, supposing them to be at least as rational as themselves, they were diligently initiated into all the wisdom of their wise parents, and as they grew up, no restrictions were laid either on their pleasures or expence; so that by the time Arthur, their eldest son, had escaped minority, the ready money fortune of fifty thousand pounds, brought by Lady Isleworth to her husband, had every shilling been squandered; besides that the *discreet* father, of this equally *discreet* son, having loaded his estates with annuities more than they could bear:—two jointures ~~was~~ alone remained untouched, one of which was daily and anxiously expected to fall in, because it hung on the life of a very old woman. From the other sacred deposit Sir Frederick could form no reasonable expectations of present advantage, as it depended on the death of his own dear lady, who was even younger than himself.

Sir

Sir Frederick never found his difficulties so numerous and so pressing as at the opening of this history. He had promised a considerable loan to Mr. Snug, whose wife, as every good wife should do, took a very tender interest in all the concerns of her husband, and had herself condescended to solicit the loan. It was impossible the Baronet should refuse so fair a suitor, and yet it appeared ten times more impossible that he should ever be able to fulfil his liberal engagements.

How Lady Isleworth disposed of herself between the hours of parting from and meeting again with Sir Frederick, would be very little to the purpose; but her eagerness to know the result of his application to her trustees, must not be passed over in silence: her curiosity and anxiety on this occasion was of so torturing a nature, that even the duties of her toilet were in a manner neglected—it might be said, that

that she rather suffered than enjoyed them; she would fix her eyes on her looking-glass, without admiring her charms, or even seeming to know that they were reflected before her; many of her ornaments were forgotten, and the rest ill-adjusted. Twenty times had she sent to enquire if Sir Frederick was come home, and a long train of repeated negatives served only to increase her large stock of discomposure.

When Lady Isleworth signified her apprehensions, that Mr. Curry would withhold his consent to the disposal of her jointure, on account of some offence which she acknowledged to have given him, she had other reasons, besides those she chose to advance, for more than *doubting* the success of her husband's negotiation. Let us see, then, from what cause these hidden fears originated, and dig to the very root of that evil from whence sprung her ladyship's plentiful stock of impatience.

Mr.

Mr. Ludlow, the father of Lady Isleworth, lived long enough for the advancement of his daughter, to see her the wife of Sir Frederick, and died soon enough to avoid being the witness of her destruction. He was what is commonly called a *careful* parent, for he never would take a second wife. He accumulated a vast fortune by trade, one moiety of which he gave the Baronet on the day of marriage, and the other resigned two years after, when called upon to take his last journey; at which period he had acquired so much insight into their mutual passion for expence, that again he evinced himself the *careful* father, for he bequeathed the remaining fifty thousand that he left behind him to the sole disposal of his daughter, without cutting off his son-in-law from the use of the yearly interest this large sum may produce. He was also a *careful* father, when he united, for her settlement in trust, two gentlemen, who, in the whole course of their lives, he had
never

never known to be united in the same opinion. Curry was in reality what Bateman only appeared to be: one was an honest man on *all* occasions; the other sometimes acted *like* an honest man, but not unless it would answer the purpose of his interest as well, or better, than playing the knave; and if we take this his real character for our clue, we shall find it the less difficult to develope the cause of certain mysterious transactions that we are going to lay before our readers, and which had for many years been passing between Bateman and his ward Lady Isleworth.

At various times, and on various emergencies, her ladyship had applied to this *Jew* Christian for certain sums of money; but the security Sir Frederick could not possibly join in, because he never was consulted on the business. Though small the sums, the frequency with which they were demanded, and the number of years they had

had been rolling on in a tide of accumulation, made them at length amount to something so considerable, that besides leaving in his rapacious hands all her valuable jewels, whilst they were cunningly copied in paste, of such exquisite workmanship as to defy the scrutiny of a husband's examination, this *wise* guardian insisted on *additional* security; and having nothing better to offer, the usurer accepted an obligation, properly executed, to receive, on the death of Sir Frederick, double the consideration of the whole debt she had incurred; or in case she should not be the survivor, he took care, by a deed of gift, that his foolish ward would reimburse his family at the same lavish rate, for his profusion of generosity in so freely administering to her extravagancies.

Thus situated, Lady Isleworth would certainly never have consented to Sir Frederick's application, but for fear her refusal might

might occasion certain questions, which might lead to certain explanations, by no means desirable. She therefore submitted with a good grace, flattering herself with this only consolation, that Bateman, for his own sake, would not betray the engagements into which she had entered. But, alas! whatever satisfaction might have been reaped from her safety in respect to the fear of detection, met with a counterpoise, in the fuller certainty, that for his *own* sake *also*, Bateman would never be prevailed upon to relinquish his trust. On the one hand she was assailed by shame, yet shame was not the most terrible of her enemies; for on the other a fiend still more ugly presented itself—the spectre of solitude was a thousand times less tolerable.

Until this morning, her ladyship had been so busy in deranging her own affairs, that it is little to be wondered at if she had never troubled herself about what belonged
to

to the affairs of her husband. This was really the case: for when told that morning they were in a bad condition, she was surprised; but the threat which accompanied the discovery, of dragging her from a town residence, added terror to surprise; and at a moment so peculiar, she would willingly have sacrificed every obstacle which stood in the way of Sir Frederick's views on that part of her fortune her father had so prudently locked up; there was no penance she would not have performed, to avoid the bitterest of all calamities, that of being forced to exchange the dear distraction of a town life for a dull, sleepy, country retirement. Her pin-money, it must here be confessed, was very rich in arrears, which had been a sort of stumbling-block in her road to pleasure. Whenever she applied to the steward, he would gravely refer her ladyship to his master, who would as gravely, though not so respectfully, refer her to the devil. Now, whether it was
that

that she did not like to put him out of humour, or that Mr. Bateman's supplies saved her from the necessity of reiterated importunities, certain it is, that for many years she had left off speaking to Sir Frederick on the subject, till debts of all descriptions, particularly those of *honour*, forced her to resolve on breaking silence, and setting out her claims. Thus determined, with a scroll of paper in her hand, on which was sketched an exact measure of all her demands, and full of confidence in his capability of discharging them, we have seen her meet him at the breakfast table, where, having also witnessed whatever passed between them on that interview, we proceed to another of no less importance.

CHAP. IV.

MORE FAMILY AFFAIRS.

TWENTY and nine times had Lady Isleworth sent Harris, her woman, to enquire if Sir Frederick was returned; but before the thirtieth could be dispatched, her heart palpitated at receiving an invitation from himself, to meet him in one of the inner drawing-rooms.

When the message was brought up, Mrs. Harris was in the act of spreading over her lady's shoulders a profusion of long light hair, hanging from a well turned head, the chief merit of which consisted in the cultivation of this captivating ornament. Instantaneously she broke from the hands of her Abigail, and immediately
took

took her giddy girlish flight down stairs ; but, turning about before she reached the bottom, she stopped, and called out for Harris ; “ Go,” said she, “ and tell Miss Isleworth, she is not to expect I shall carry my indulgence to such preposterous lengths, as to let her mope away all the evening in her chamber, whilst I am killing myself with fatigue in forming little foolish parties at whist and cribbage—say it is her *duty* to ease me of this unprofitable trouble. Do you hear me, Harris ?”

“ Yes, my lady.”

“ And tell her, my faro will not set late to-night ; or, if it should, and her head continues to ache, so that she *cannot* keep out of her bed, I shall dismiss her before it breaks up.” She stayed to say no more, but hurried on to meet her husband, trying, as she passed along, to fortify her spirits against the *very* worst that might happen ;

pen; a precaution by no means unnecessary. Had she not been armed to encounter disappointment, the first glance she caught of Sir Frederick must have conquered all that yet remained unconquered of hope and expectation.

He was sitting on the edge of a card-table, his looks vacant and sullen; he was also whistling a certain doleful air, which his lady had often observed he never attempted, but in the strongest fits of sulkiness or passion; one of the packs of cards that lay on the table, he was trying to turn to his amusement, by tossing it up with his right hand and catching it again with his left, a sort of manual exercise which he managed so adroitly, that with safety he might have taken a bett to any amount, that he would not throw out one turn in a thousand, had any man, with spirit equal to his own, offered him the temptation; but, alas! had he looked round for such a

bon vivant, he would have seen only his *wife* standing before him, who, with the best inclinations for gaming, had nothing to lose.

Her ladyship paused for a moment, contemplating, with a mixture of surprise and pleasure, the velocity and truth of his throws, seeming to lose, in admiration of his dexterity, all solid considerations ; till, roused from the transient raptures of forgetfulness, by seeing him dash the cards from one end of the room to the other, and hearing him crying out in a voice of thunder, “ What the devil made you send me on a fool’s errand ? ”

“ A fool’s errand ! ” she retorted, with some warmth, “ why surely, my dear, you went on your *own* errand ; you wished to make the application—I gave my consent, and devoutly wished you success ; therefore, if you have failed in obtaining it, the
fault

fault you know cannot be *mine*, our unlucky stars are alone to blame; and indeed I do think of late we have been mighty unfortunate."

"This is fine talking, Lady Isleworth; but it will not do—it will not blind me to the confounded arts of your sex. You have *certainly* entered into a conspiracy with that rascal Bateman; or why, at the first mention of the affair, did he bluntly tell me you never *did*, would, or could expect *his* sanction to *so* absurd a proposition? Zounds, Madam! how would he have dared to use me thus, if, by some private means, you had not put him on his guard, and encouraged his insolence?"

Lady Isleworth felt herself blameless of the accusation laid to her charge. She well enough understood in what manner to construe Bateman's firm rejection of her husband's proposal; it was no more than she

expected; but, conscious of no *new* duplicity, and satisfied that what she formerly practised had not transpired, she very soon convinced Sir Frederick of the fallacy on which his suspicions were founded, she offered to go the next day, to try what her own interest would do with this stubborn guardian; upon which he begged her pardon, and confessed himself ashamed that he had ever doubted her sincerity.

Domestic harmony was thus restored to its usual standard. But the Baronet's vivacity continuing rather below par, his amiable moiety exerted all her infantine playfulness to conjure away his spleen;—she talked of Mrs. Snug, of suppers, of dinners, of operas, plays, masquerades, of every thing but their *own* necessities; in short, she accommodated her subjects so well to his humour, that it is probable he might have buried, at least for that night, the remembrance of all his disappointments,

ments, if the mention of Mrs. Snug had not kept them swimming on the surface of his memory—to Mrs. Snug he had promised five hundred pounds, and in the present situation of affairs he might as well have promised her five hundred millions.

In the midst of her ladyship's incessant efforts to please and amuse him, he started on his legs, and turning three times round upon his heel with the grace of a Vestris, he asked her this plain question—"What are we to do, if that cursed Bateman holds to his text?"

CHAP. V.

THE ANSWER.

“**W**HAT are we to do!” she replied, laughing, “surely that can occasion no great puzzle. How do other people of fashion manage in the time of scarcity? Let us follow their example; and, by appearing more splendid than ever, give the world no room to make ill-natured remarks. It is only your poor spiritless beings that are proper objects of ridicule, who, afraid of their shadows, renounce the appearance of affluence, when they no longer possess the reality; first drops one footman from behind the carriage, then a butler is missed at the side-board; soon after, perhaps, the porter is dislodged from his hall, and a trolloping maid-servant opens the
the

the door to tell us nobody is at home! Nay more, I have myself known an instance, where a lady of *this* description, before she was *half* ruined, sold her own four coach horses, and now jobs only a pair. But these are *rare* instances; I cannot name many of them: I profess, that for one such I will produce a hundred who, the poorer they are the better they live."

"Well, well," cried Sir Frederick, rather impatiently, "all this may be true; but money I want, and money I must have."

"Lord!" replied her ladyship, "I forgot to ask if you had been with old Curry, and what he said to you."

"Said!—why he too gave me a flat refusal, though rather in more civil terms than that scoundrel Bateman."

“ Well, I protest I did not expect this of Curry ; I thought, though we had quarrelled with him, he would very willingly have done such a *little* matter to oblige us ; but never fear, for when I talk with them to-morrow, my hopes are extremely sanguine that I shall bring them both into a better temper.”

“ To tell you the truth,” returned Sir Frederick, “ I have no notion that either of them will ever be brought to a sense of their incorrigible impertinence, so I think you had better let them alone ; and as they deny their consent, I know an honest Jew who may put us in the way of doing the business, without their privity or approbation.”

“ How monstrous convenient !” exclaimed Lady Isleworth.

Sir

Sir Frederick shook his head—"Why yes," said he, "but it must be done to a great disadvantage, I shall not pocket more than one-fifth of its value."

"Pish! never mind that," returned the lady, "we shall be well off to have money at any rate; one thousand pounds *now* is, in my opinion, a thousand degrees better than five times five when one has less occasion for money. Positively, at all events, we must not degrade ourselves; any sort of infringement on our present mode of living is absolutely impossible! Can you conceive the disgrace which must be the consequence of our condescending to the little *pitiful* practices of frugality?"—

Her ladyship was thus proceeding, with strongly marked energy of expression, when the flood-gates of her eloquence suddenly closed on a servant's coming into the room, who informed his master, that a person just

arrived express from Bath desired to see him, having business of importance to communicate. The admittance of this stranger was accordingly ordered; and Sir Frederick exclaimed, "I'll lay fifty pounds to a shilling my aunt Bridget is going to be troublesome again."——

"Well, Sir," seeing the man enter as he spoke the last word, "what is your important business with me?"

"I am by profession, Sir, an undertaker, and just arrived from Bath, very humbly to offer you my services."

"I have no occasion for your services," said Sir Frederick, angrily.

"I am sorry, very sorry indeed, Sir, to find that you are already engaged; I thought I should have been the first in my application; her ladyship's death was hardly
known

known at Bath, and indeed I did think no body could have had the *pleasure* of conveying the sad tidings earlier than myself."

"Ho, ho! I begin to understand you—speak out man—Is Lady Bridget dead?—really and truly, absolutely and *bona fide* dead?"

"Alas! Sir," cried the undertaker, lengthening his visage, "it is a *melancholy* truth; and I was in hopes to have received the honour of your commands respecting her ladyship's interment."

"You *shall* have them—you *shall* have them," cried he in a tone of transport, "yes, you *shall* have them, by G—!"

"Nothing can be more reasonable," added Lady Isleworth, her eyes dancing
C 6 with

with joy, "so pray set about it immediately; you have *very* much obliged us by your diligence on this occasion."

The undertaker's appearance answered to his profession. He returned this condescending acknowledgment by a profound bow; and with a solemnity of countenance suitable to the subject, entered into a detail at how much cost and trouble he supported a correspondence in families of consequence, by which means he had often the pleasure of being the first to convey news of an unexpected demise to the surviving relatives of the defunct; and ended with supposing, that her ladyship's remains were to be interred in the family vault.

"What! carry her as far as Westmoreland?" interrupted the Baronet, "by no means, by no means, Mr. Sable! the journey would be quite inconvenient; she
never

never liked the country, or any of our family residences—no, no, *that* will never do.”

“Where then, Sir, would you be pleased to direct that her ladyship should repose?”

“Why, I think the Abbey at Bath may do very well.”

“Granted!” replied the *Man of Death*.
“No doubt, Sir Frederick, your intentions are, that things shall be done *handsomely*?”

“Harkee, friend—as far as ye can make fifty pounds go in *pageantry* I will frank you—for any thing beyond that sum I will not be answerable.”

“I presume, Sir, that her ladyship is to be buried in lead, and fifty pounds would
but

but barely enable me to put her into a deal shell."

"Well, well, that is your business and not mine; put her into a leaden coffin or a quart bottle, I shall ask no questions about the matter, but the devil take me if I allow you more than fifty pounds for the job."

A loud knocking at the door announced the dawn of a riotous night; the poor trader in death, crest-fallen, and dejected at the hard bargain Sir Frederick had driven, was hastily dismissed, and the merry mourners could not find time to congratulate each other, before they were surrounded by a little army of friends, all of whom were well disposed to take a share in their good fortune.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

WHO SHE WAS.

LADY Bridget Isleworth was the fat indolent Dowager of Sir Frederick's uncle, to whose title and estates his father first and then himself had succeeded, in all about thirty years ; a very long time, it must be acknowledged, for the payment of a heavy jointure ! Where is the calculator who would give a wife thirty years to run after the lease of her husband's life had expired ? or where the heir who would, without grumbling, have answered the unconscionable claim of *such* an everlasting old woman ?

Sir Frederick, forced by a long, tedious, series of experience, to confess that grumbling

bling was neither pleasant or profitable, hit on a better expedient, and so totally banished from his memory the *lady* and her demands on *his* estate, that he never recollected either the one or the other, except when roused by the irresistible calls, not of his own conscience, but of her ladyship's lawyers: yet even these latter mementos, though extremely troublesome, were often set at defiance, in so much that an overplus of two thousand pounds remained in his hands, which all the diligence of law could not get out of them; one method only could have brought him to account, but Lady Bridget would have nothing to do with sheriffs' officers.

This *reasonable* dowager saw the impropriety of her living beyond the limits prescribed by custom. She had also some money of her own, with very few occasions of using it, having survived the desire of all sorts of pleasure, except that of *small* play, which

which was neither expensive or inconvenient. For these reasons, though her application to Sir Frederick was regularly made half-yearly, she as regularly accepted, in lieu of her annuity, his civil excuses; and if she had one quarter paid when five quarters were due, it was even *more* than she expected.

That part of the Isleworth estate appropriated to the uses of Lady Bridget's settlement, was the only unentailed part of the whole; besides which advantage, it was so firmly secured to its original purposes, that though the present possessor had moved heaven and earth, Jew and Christian, to burthen it, as all the rest of his acres had been burthened, yet the thing was impossible.

With what transports then must he have heard of the release of his dear aunt, by
which

which event his still dearer estates were also *released*. If she was gone no body could tell where, they might soon have followed, nobody knows how.

By an unusual clause in the marriage articles, it was whimsically *provided*, that the funeral expences should arise out of the jointured estate; but as no particular sum was specified for this occasional compliment, it produced the singular effect of engendering the *very* first idea of economy that had ever crossed the brain of Sir Frederick, which, however highly the prudent world may applaud it, was greatly reprobated by the noble minded undertaker, in whose opinion a *handsome* funeral compensated for all sorts of *living* evils; and to such a flame was his resentment worked up, by reflecting on the *pitiful* fifty pound *job*, that when, on his arrival at Bath, his wife, with tears in her eyes, ran to tell him

a great

a *great* misfortune had happened; that he had been *too* hasty, for that Lady Bridget Isleworth had only fallen down in a fit, and was come to life again, instead of being discomfited, he snapped his fingers with the full force of exultation, and cried out, to the utter astonishment of his sorrowing help-mate, "I am glad of it!—with all my heart!" He then snatched up a pen, and addressed the following laconic epistle to Sir Frederick.

"SIR,

"Please understand that I cannot have
 "the pleasure of putting your worthy re-
 "lation Lady Bridget Isleworth to repose;
 "fifty pounds would have done the thing
 "with no sort of *neatness*; but hoping to
 "have future favours of *like* kind from *self*
 "and *family*, I would not have been off
 "my bargain, if her ladyship had not very
 "unexpectedly come to life again!—Hope
 "expences

“expences incurred will be considered on
“*next* occasion.—And am, Sir, your most
“dutiful servant to command,

“JOHN GINGERLY.”

“*Sir Frederick Isleworth.*”

Could Sir Frederick or my lady have
furnished the misfortune that hung over
their heads—had they known, that whilst
they gayly sported in the sanguine rays of
expectation, the very foundation of these ex-
pectations would have fallen to the ground
—what a sombre complexion might such
knowledge have cast over the exhilarating
amusements of *that* evening, which they
considered as the forerunner of wealth, or
at least a partial redemption from present
difficulties; but being in this instance the
favourites of fortune, the mortifying intel-
ligence that Lady Bridget was not yet
ready to receive the funeral honours so
prudently provided, did not reach town
till

till after Sir Frederick had got a purchaser for that part of his estate on which she was jointured, together with the sum of one thousand pounds in advance, before the deeds could be compleated, which were to convey the whole of this only unincumbered part of his property from himself and family for ever.

THE gentleman who had been purchased was no other than Mr. Cury: he had refused to give up the rights of a guardian, because solemnly engaged never to relinquish them;—it was a promise drawn from him in the last moments of an expiring friend: Mr. Lushlow exacted the vow, and religion taught him to respect it.

This obligation, when soberly explained to Sir Frederick, bore so strongly the figure of civil necessity, that he was not half so much displeased as he had before been, with the rude denial of Bartram; he even condescended to explain Cury on the other
 CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

PRELIMINARIES DISCUSSED.

THE gentleman who made this sudden purchase was no other than Mr. Curry: he had refused to give up the rights of a guardian, *because* solemnly engaged never to relinquish them;—it was a promise drawn from him in the last moments of an expiring friend: Mr. Ludlow exacted the vow, and religion taught him to respect it.

This obligation, when soberly explained to Sir Frederick, bore so strongly the figure of civil necessity, that he was not half so much displeased as he had before been, with the rude denial of Bateman; he even condescended to consult Curry on the emergency

gency of his affairs, and complained to him of his family expences, which the honest well-meaning merchant had very wisely advised him to *retrench*.

But, that wisdom is not *always* vindicated of her children, there was a strong proof in the stubborn dislike with which this wholesome counsel was received by the Baronet, who coldly replied,

“ There was no necessity that he should curtail Lady Isleworth of her *domestic* or *social* enjoyments for the sake of a little *present* embarrassment, which would, in the course of nature, *soon* be done away; his old aunt could not live for *ever*, and at her death he should sell an estate, the profits arising from the sale of which would liquidate *all* his debts.”

He might have said, *except* those contracted on annuities, which swallowed up
four-

four-fifths of his income. But with these irredeemable incumbrances he never chose to burthen his *own* thoughts, or intrude a list of them on the memory of his friends, having contracted none of these *private* blessings but on terms of *silence*, which it was not for the interest of his *money-lending* connections to break through, as long as their demands were punctually answered, which hitherto had been effected at the expence of honest tradesmen, who admitted him into their books with more faith than discretion.

The conversation I have been alluding to happened on that memorable evening, when Sir Frederick waited on Mr. Curry, to *coax* or *curse* him out of his guardianship; but finding neither likely to succeed, and fancying he saw something in his benevolent countenance that seemed to say, *I would serve you if I could*, it is better, thought he, to make a friend than an enemy

enemy of this man, who, on some other occasion, may at least replenish my play-purse with a brace of hundreds. In conformity to this convenient opinion, he dropped the *hauteur* of a drawcanfir, and assumed the language of a suppliant, praying for counsel at the shrine of experience.

Mr. Curry asked him, "What he conceived to be the value of his Westmoreland estate, subject to the jointure of Lady Bridget?"

"It had been estimated," he replied, "at thirty thousand pounds, and hoped it would at *least* produce him *that* sum."

Before they parted, Curry desired Sir Frederick he might be consulted on the purchase, whenever it was to be disposed of: "he wanted," he said, "a landed property in *that* county, of course would give him more for an estate in such good condi-

tion than any other person less attached to the beauties of situation than himself."

This request gave our man of fashion a sort of negative pleasure, without acting as an immediate soporific on the shattered constitution of his deceased spirits. The prospect of touching so considerable a sum was pleasant enough; but who could measure the distance between his necessity and his affluence? he had never indeed heard that any mortal, since the Antedeluvian age, could get to the summit of two hundred years, and then tug away for the third; but if such a sturdy mortal was *ever* to exist again, he felt himself fully persuaded it would be his aunt Bridget.

We have seen, after the conference had broken up, with how heavy a heart Sir Frederick returned to his splendid home: we may also have perceived no *bad* specimen of fortune's whimsicality, in the arrival

rival of the undertaker, Mr. John Gingerly, with *glad* tidings from Bath, and the sorrowful ones which awaited his return thither; and now we have only, if you please, to bestow our comments on our hero's good luck, which carried him to close the bargain for his Westmoreland estate with Mr. Curry, at an early hour the next morning, before the letters were delivered.

Having agreed to sell and buy at the rate of twenty-five years purchase, one thousand pounds earnest money were deposited in the hands of the thrice happy squanderer, who immediately flew to the house of his friend Captain Jerry Snug, and tossed into the lap of his expecting lady a moiety of the new acquired treasure; for which his word was before engaged; nor did he take any personal security for this sum, or other loans made in the same way, but such as

Captain Snug rendered valid by a full and hearty concurrence.

These two visits, the one of business, the other of pleasure, being finished much to the satisfaction of Sir Frederick, he hastily drew out his watch—found it was past his hour of dressing—exactd a promise from Mrs. Snug that she would shew herself at his wife's next assembly—took a hasty, but tender adieu—knocked at the library door, as he passed down stairs, to let the complaisant husband know he was retiring—and hastened home to make Lady Isleworth a sharer in his good humour.

CHAP. VIII.

THE FORTITUDE OF A FINE LADY.

SIR FREDERICK had this morning gone out on foot, which was often his custom, when he bent his steps towards the *magnet* of his inclination—for this good reason, that *servants* have eyes and ears, and *wives* have curiosity.

Just as he reached his house, busied in a profound reverie on the *use* of money, and the fascination of beauty, my lady's footman rushed out at the door—his face bore in it all the bustle of dispatch—he had no hat on his head—and in the violence of his haste he ran against his master, whose eyes were turned on the pavement, and would have laid him low, if the Baronet, roused

by so rude a shock, had not set himself in a posture of defence; but, perceiving the danger proceeded from one of his own domestics, with a curse and a blow, he demanded the occasion of his hurry; when he learned, that the mate of his bosom was dying, that the terrified servant was running to fetch the doctor!

Sir Frederick neither retarded or forwarded the haste of the messenger, but walked on to his apartment, with his thoughts rather fixed on a lively *mistress* than an expiring *wife*.

Soberly he sat himself down on a chair—soberly pulled his bell—and, on the appearance of his valet, as soberly enquired if his son Arthur was come back from Newmarket?

“No,” was the reply: but before he could ask after the health of Lady Isleworth,

worth, if he had any such intentions, his eldest daughter Clarissa burst into the room, and, half suffocated with her tears, cried out, "Oh! papa, what can be the matter with mama?—she is dying!—she is dying!—pray come to her this moment." She snatched his hand, and dragged him reluctantly enough to the sick chamber.

Stretched on a sofa lay Lady Isleworth, in strong hysterics, alternately screaming, laughing, and writhing her delicate form into a thousand grotesque figures, as if she had been under the immediate influence of witchcraft.

Clarissa threw herself by the side of her mother, and endeavoured to keep her head steady, whilst Sir Frederick, advancing with as much *decent* melancholy as his happy state of mind could lend to accommodate his countenance, took up one of her ladyship's hands, when, behold, his

curiosity was awakened by something which she grasped so fast, that to unloose her hold cost him infinite pains and many struggles; but at length the task was accomplished, when he became possessed of a paper, as the reward of his exertions, the contents of which, as his eager eyes ran them over, had nearly reduced him to the same situation as the dying lady, being no other than Mr. John Gingerly's letter to announce the resurrection of Lady Bridget Isleworth!

It was many hours before this deplorable couple recovered their *usual* spirits, or even their very small portion of common sense. Yet the wife's fit of spleen was shaken off sooner than the husband's chagrin; and being fit company only for themselves, every body else was dismissed from the apartment, whilst, by a sort of tacit consent, they continued together, devising on ways and means to extricate themselves from the difficulties that involved them.

Lady

Lady Isleworth lifted her head from the arm of the sofa on which it was before reclined, and sitting up in an erect posture, sighed from the very bottom of her disconsolate heart—Sir Frederick walked up and down the room, meditating, with a vacant countenance, on their mutual disappointment—her ladyship was the first to break this awful silence.

“What is to be done?”—she asked,—
“What shall we do?”

Sir Frederick stopped short—stared her full in the face—but answered not; when she again repeated her question, with this addition, “My dear, Sir Frederick, what shall we do?”

Common politeness now obliged him to answer her exclamation, and he replied—
“Go to the devil! I don’t know any *shorter* way out of our perplexities. I have

engaged to sell the Westmoreland estate this morning, and have received a thousand pounds earnest."

"Charming!" cried out his transported wife, "but why did you not tell me this good news sooner? A thousand pounds is better than nothing—it will enable us to fulfill all our *present* engagements! Pray give me five hundred of it this moment—you know we have promised Clarissa a ball—her establishment depends, I am convinced it does, on her appearance that night!—Lord Clarence has given broad hints already, and I am sure he will make proposals the very next morning.

"Not so fast," dryly interrupted the Baronet, "I have no *five* hundred pounds, curse the old woman! to bestow on *chances* or *puppet shows*."

"Why, what then have you done with the money? Did you not tell me this moment

moment you had received a thousand pounds earnest for your Westmoreland estate?"

"Suppose I have, what is your wise conclusion even if I was *really* in possession of the *whole* sum?"

"Certainly I shall say you cannot dispose of it more *fashionably*, or to greater advantage, than in the manner I propose."

"Confound your proposition!—half is already paid to tradesmen, as a prop to their patience, and *now* I must raise that again to pay back the deposit.—Of all the mischief that could befall me, Lady Bridget's rising *before* the day of judgment is the greatest!"

"But, Sir Frederick, why was you so premature, to pay your *dirty* trades-people

ple before our *own* necessities were supplied?"

He whistled, to lull his conscience, rather than brave its checks, by confirming the untruth he had advanced.

"Surely it was mightily ill-judged," pursued she; "but, as five hundred is saved out of the wreck, let me have two hundred and fifty, which, with *good* management, and the new credit we *must* have gained by paying these people, may enable us to be *decent*, though not magnificent.

"You are enough to provoke the patience of Job," thundered out the Baronet, "have I not told you I *must* pay back the whole sum to Curry—it was *he* that bargained for my estate—and I know but one way to raise it—you have jewels, madam, and I have debts, are you willing to part with

with the one that the other may be redeemed?"

"Willing!" cried her ladyship, hesitating, and pausing as she spoke, "Willing!—Yes, to be sure; I am perfectly willing to oblige you in any thing—that is to say, in any thing within my reach—but what you propose is impossible; for indeed, my dear, you have been so negligent in the payment of my pin-money, that my *jewels* are long ago *all* converted into *paste*!—Nay, don't fret about it (for now his rage was no longer to be restrained, and he stamped with the fury of a madman).—I think myself as well dressed in the *shadow* as in the *substance*," continued she; and was proceeding with her usual volubility, when the door suddenly flew open, and in bounced their son Arthur, leading a handsome, lively, bold-looking young woman, whom Lady Isleworth received into her expanded arms,

arms, with an exclamation of joyful surprise, by the stile and title of her "Dear, dear Lady Ann Orford!"

"My dear Lady Ann!" was also repeated by Sir Frederick with equal cordiality, whilst her ladyship only replied to these spontaneous marks of fondness by a loud laugh, in which she was joined by Arthur, who, as soon as he could articulate, wonderfully astonished them, by presenting their unexpected visitor, *not* as Lady Ann Orford, but as Lady Ann Isleworth.

"Indeed!" said she, seeing her new *papa* and *mama* with a flag of incredulity hoisted on their countenances, "indeed what the *wretch* tells you is *too* true! Do you know, that instead of running at New-market, he came to the *Wilderness* to run away with me, whether I would or no.—We have actually been before the black-smith,

smith, who put on our fetters so tight, that, heaven help us ! I fear we shall find it hard to get rid of them."

This decided declaration on the lady's part distanced every doubt ; Sir Frederick and Lady Isleworth renewed their caresses—their endearments were in proportion to the acres of this *reputed* heiress. And now the old aunt—the Westmoreland estate—the thousand pounds—the false jewels—with all their other various crosses, vanished before the splendid alliance of their son Arthur, whose real situation we shall disclose in the next chapter.

CHAP. IX.

INTREPID LOVE.

ARTHUR ISLEWORTH was a chip of the old block; he knew every body *but* himself, and loved every thing that did *not* promote his interest; he inherited all the *sense* of his father, with all the *propensities* of his mother, yet had never been remarked for his *talents* or his *frugality*—but for a handsome pair of eyes and regular features he had pretensions not to be disputed; these procured him a ready passport into the hearts of almost every female who looked on the *dangerous creature*; a presumptuous experiment! which, if the Scandalous Chronicle *can* be credited, has cost a dozen of them, at least, the trifling

ing price of their whole *little* stock of chastity.

Lady Ann Orford, the only child of Lord Benvour, did not gaze on the charms of Arthur with *impunity*: she had seen him three times, and danced with him once. The flame which was lighted in these transient interviews nothing but matrimony could quench.

At first he appeared insensible to the advantage of his conquest, and would probably have continued so to the end of time, his attention being divided by a multiplicity of beauties contending for his notice, but for the lady's *own* ingenuity, who soon got acquainted with his mother. Now, whatever faults may be laid to the present times, that of maiden shyness is not to be numbered amongst them: so the love-sick dame of quality let her new friend into the affairs of her heart, and Lady Isleworth saw
the

the connection in a mighty favourable point of view.

With some difficulty, at last she beat it into the head of her darling son, that he could not do better than offer himself to Lady Ann's acceptance. The sacrifice was accordingly made, with more archness than ardour; and accepted, with more readiness than delicacy.

Sir Frederick waited on Lord Benvour with proposals: but Lord Benvour had other views for *his* daughter, and gave the Baronet's application a *decided* negative. Hard words passed between them; they parted in all the bitterness of wrath.

The next day Lady Ann was forcibly taken to the country, and her sapient lover thought no more of the matter. Not so her intriguing ladyship: a tender billet reached his hands in a few days after her seclusion,

seclusion, inviting his attendance in the neighbourhood of her father's house, from whence she would find a way, she assured him, to make her elopement, in defiance of locks, bolts, and duennas.

He obeyed the summons, having nothing else to do on the day she proposed meeting him. Accordingly he set out for the *Wilderness*; but did not let his family into the secret, merely that they might not laugh at him, if his scheme of carrying off the lady should prove unsuccessful; he therefore made them believe he was going to visit his *stud*, which he had sent to Newmarket, to be ready for the next week's sport.

Having once embarked, he made such dispatch, that at the end of eight days we see him returned to the arms of his *transported* parents, with an additional rib to those

those with which nature had provided him. So now let us leave them, exulting in their new acquired felicity, and take up some other branches of this *wonder working* but *not singular* family.

CHAP. X.

CLARISSA ISLEWORTH.

CLARISSA's appearance in this uncertain world, which some think a very charming one, whilst others call it a vale of misery and shadows, was announced eleven months after the first exhibition of her brother Arthur. Mr. Curry had taken upon him to answer for her at the holy font, that she should be taught the Lord's prayer and ten commandments, like other Christian children; but finding, at the age of six years, that she could not repeat a word of either, he was a man of too much honour to renounce the duties for which he had made himself responsible; and at the joint request of his amiable wife, the young lady was readily consigned to their charge,

charge, *because* she should be out of the way, *and* because the good people to whom she was intrusted had no children of their own; so that even the *wisdom* of Sir Frederick and Lady Isleworth was sufficient to instruct them that no body carries their riches with them to another world, and that some body must inherit them in this.

Placed under the auspices of her new protectors, Miss Isleworth made rapid progress, not only in Christian but all other knowledge; and at thirteen we may venture to pronounce her a very amiable, a very beautiful, and a very accomplished girl. When she had attained this critical period, Mrs. Curry was called upon to render up the volume of her life, on the pages of which were written the actions of forty years, in characters so pure from stains, so glowing with charity in all its figurative loveliness, as can leave no doubts on the mind of the reader, but that her accounts
were

were passed with applause at the bar of heaven.

It would be superfluous to say, that the filial endearments of a child so engaging as Clarissa had very much interested the heart and affections of Mr. Curry; he had assisted to cultivate the flowers of her mind, and to eradicate, as much as lay within the compass of his skill, the pernicious weeds of constitutional foibles. But nature is a cunning gardener; her seeds of original sin she sows deep, and their roots are stubborn. Amongst all the good qualities of his young charge, this plain worthy man could not fail to perceive a little dash of coquetry, and a great passion for shew. At these evils he had been tugging seven years, tearing them up by the branches, but leaving the root in vigour.

On the death of Mrs. Curry, Sir Frederick and Lady Isleworth came to re-
claim

claim their daughter: the generous guardian wept with agony to part with his darling, but could find no pretence for detaining her, having no longer a female inspectress to direct her conduct. So great was his sorrow, that when he saw the carriage which conveyed her from him turn from the door, and felt his cheeks yet wet with her tears, he cried out, clasping his hands together, “*All* that I loved in life is taken from me, and I have nothing more to lose!”

After the first burst of grief had subsided, which the grateful heart of Clarissa naturally experienced, on being finally separated from those indulgent friends who, for so many years, seemed only to exist in her pleasures, happiness, and improvement, she began to consider her parents in a more favourable light than she at first beheld them; she thought her father very good humoured, and her mother
one

one of the finest dressed ladies she had ever seen.

Whilst under the care of Mr. and Mrs. Curry she saw them but seldom, and then only in *disshabile*, at one or other of their houses; but on the day when they came to fetch her away to reside with them, they appeared with all the advantages that riches could display.

They were bound that evening first for the opera, and afterwards to sup at Lady Harford's, and from thence to the masquerade in a select party of gipseys, whose habits awaited them at the house of her ladyship.

Lady Isleworth gave notice to Mr. Curry of her intentions to call for his beloved charge at ten, and to treat her with a peep at the opera, that she might not be moped

to death with melancholy on her change of habitation.

“You are a lovely creature, my dear,” said this *sensible* mother, as she sat gazing on Clarissa’s cherub face, who was placed opposite to her in the carriage, “you are indeed a very charming girl! Don’t you think so, Sir Frederick?”

“She will do very well,” replied the Baronet, with more admiration in the expression of his countenance than there appeared to be approbation in his words, “and if she holds up her head, and forgets every thing but her obedience to us, we shall have no reason to be ashamed of her.”

Clarissa’s little heart bounded with joy at these, and many other proofs of her parents’ folly, considered by her as tokens only of their
their

their fondness; and when she lightly followed the footsteps of her mother into the opera-house, which happened to be exceedingly crowded, every eye was fixed on the interesting figure before them.

A handsome youth, who had taken his post in the pit *vis-à-vis* to Lady Isleworth's box, cried out to an elderly gentleman who sat next him, "What a phenomenon! Modesty has united with vivacity, and sensibility joined itself to infantine grace, in forming that adorable creature."

Many more such speeches, from different quarters, reached the ears of the delighted beauty, and increased the animation of those delicate blushes which were before sufficiently becoming.

The exultation of Sir Frederick and Lady Isleworth at the universal gaze their daughter attracted, produced, before one

act of the piece was over, with their usual sagacity, this determination, that, young as she was, the beautiful creature should be presented the following winter; because, they observed, she never could alter for the *better*, but must change for the worse. Besides, they foresaw about that time there would be a plentiful harvest of young heirs who *must* be provided for, and these girls who are not early in the field can have no chance of reaping to their advantage.

This was Lady Isleworth's observation. But, why do I say so? I should never forgive the reader who could suppose it to be my *own*.

Clarissa, though but thirteen, anticipated in her growth the appearance of sixteen: her face and form, had they been moulded in wax, would have crowned the artist with immortal glory, as well for exactitude of proportion as beauty of colouring.

Her

Her dress, this evening of her first and early exhibition on the stage of the world, was a frock of clear muslin, setting off her figure to the best advantage; a black sash, worn in commemoration of the afflicting accident by which she was separated from the friends of her infancy, incircled her slender waist; her snowy bosom, shaded only by a lawn tucker, often heaved the sigh of recollection to that melancholy event; nor could the magic of adulation repress the same sentiment from sometimes clouding her illumined countenance with momentary sadness, which, instead of defacing a single charm, gave to its expression all the graces of variety: she wore no ornament on her head, except what nature had bestowed, whose bounty might be called prodigality—so unsparingly did she lavish the finest auburn tresses in the world that they fell below the waist in wild profusion, and in part concealed a forehead unequalled in symmetry, unrivalled in

E. 3
whiteness;

whiteness; all the milder virtues revelled in her soft blue eyes; and envy herself, had she ever been known to speak truth, might have acknowledged, that every particular feature had its commission for the destruction of mankind.

At the end of the second act, in the middle of a pathetic song, once the favourite of Mrs. Curry, Clarissa, overpowered by the tender feelings of retrospection, and too young to know any thing of that fashionable fortitude which is a declared enemy to all sorts of grief, but what may owe its source to the desertion of a lover or the death of a lap-dog, felt inclined to shed tears, and shed them so freely, that her mortified parents hurried her out of the house, covered with confusion at her childish behaviour. "She ought to have known better," remarked Lady Isleworth; "it is entirely owing to these *dowdy* people, who have brought her up,

up, and beat sentiment into her head unmixed with politeness."

At the door of her father's house the poor disgraced girl was bid to go to the nursery, from which she would no more be taken till she knew how to conduct herself in the circle of fashion.

Madame Finette, the French governess, being summoned, Clarissa was committed to her care, who conducted her to an apartment known by the appellation of the lecture room, because it was here that every child in the family rode their own hobby-horse, taking their lectures, as they did their sweetmeats, just as inclination directed, by which means they were not very likely to be cloyed with either.

In their way to this scholastic repository, Madame Finette was asked by Clarissa how long her brothers and sisters had been in

bed? for, be it here mentioned, there had tumbled into this ill-conducted house no less than six younger children, who were all destined to scramble for education and fortunes as well as they could.

“ I should suppose,” said Miss Isleworth, “ at so late an hour I can have no chance of seeing them to-night ?”

“ You will see them this moment,” replied the governess, “ for your sister Matilda has a cold and fever, and your mama indulges all the rest to sit by her bed-side till twelve, and amuse the poor child with a game at cards.”

Clarissa lifted up her eyes, but said nothing, though perhaps she was drawing a silent comparison between her *real* and *adopted* mothers’ management of young people.

They

They passed from the school room into the sick chamber, where the little invalid, with a handkerchief bound round her forehead, lay stretched on the bed, with all her cloaths on, because she did not chuse they should be taken off till her companions were put to rest also. Clarissa, having fondly received and returned their caresses, very soon prevailed on the diminutive party to retire: she continued half an hour at the side of Matilda's pillow, then left it for her own, first submitting to the custom in which she had been trained, of thankfulness to her Creator for past, and imploring his future protection.

CHAP. XI.

ROSES HAVE THEIR THORNS, AND VIRTUES HAVE THEIR SHADOWS.

WHAT were Clarissa's foibles?

Too large a share of *constitutional* vivacity—*too* little inclination to take the trouble of thinking—a *too* great desire to create admiration—and a disposition *too* much addicted to what is commonly stiled romantic, but to which, with permission, I would give a softer epithet; I would call it the effusion of tenderness, at least when springing from a mind so well-disposed as Miss Isleworth's. We know of no other foibles; and these certainly are dangerous enough to a young woman, dragged into the world before she can possibly have formed

formed any idea of the beings which compose it; and if these errors of nature ripened to greater perfection in the hot-bed of dissipation than they would have arrived at under the careful eye of her late guardians, we may be *grieved* but must not be *surprised* at their progress.

Sir Frederick and Lady Isleworth, for several weeks saw no more of their eldest daughter, after having secured her under the paternal roof; because, on the self same evening, they formed a party of pleasure for the Isle of Wight, and set off the next morning without thinking on Clarissa, or enquiring what was become of the poor little complaining Matilda, but left them both, with the rest of their infant troop, to repose for safety on Providence and the household apothecary.

There are moments of temptation to the youthful imagination, when the early les-

sions of wisdom, however deeply implanted, may be forgotten, but it is seldom that they can be entirely eradicated, unless the head and heart should happen to be at irreconcilable variance with reason and goodness.

Had Mr. Curry seen Clarissa enter the opera-house—beheld with what eagerness she caught the flying sounds of encircling admiration—witnessed the transports that flushed her cheeks and sparkled her eyes, he would have cried out, “*The foundation I have laid is shaken, and the whole edifice must fall to the ground!*”

Yet the following day, had he contemplated her in the act of conveying those instructions to others which she had learned from himself—had he seen her in the nursery, furrounded by her lisping brothers and sisters, hearing them read their catechisms, and teaching them to say their prayers, which, being a new exercise, seemed to de-
light

light them as much as any other novelty; had he heard her preaching to them the pleasures of application and the disgrace of idleness,—then would he have rejoiced in his amiable pupil—then would he have exclaimed, “ *This good girl never can be seduced by the prevalence of example.*”

Enough at present of Clarissa, and the little brood of untaught urchins who claimed her cares and divided her affections; we now turn back to a breakfast scene, succeeding that day when Arthur, by bringing an unportioned wife into the family, seemed to have completed its destruction.

There were assembled round the table of this elegant repast, ostentatiously decorated by plate unclean and china ill paired, Sir Frederick Isleworth, with a *doubting* countenance, in which satisfaction would have shone predominant, had there been no difference whether a man married a wife *with*
 or

or *without* the consent of her father;—Lady Hleworth, happy, because her happiness was unalloyed by reflection—supremely happy that she could address a daughter-in-law by the high-founding titles of Lady Ann, and your Ladyship;—the bridegroom, paying little attention to any body, or any thing, except himself, his tea, his bread, and his butter;—the bride, highly rouged, trying *not* to look confident; whilst Clarissa, like modesty personified, but pale and dejected, closed the family circle.

“Arthur,” said Sir Frederick, in a tone half pleased half serious, “the honour this lady has done us, by uniting herself to our house, must make us active to deserve it.”

“Damn the tea!” cried Arthur, who had burnt his mouth at the beginning of his father’s flowery conception: “*Clarissa*, why did you give it me so confounded hot?”

“It

"It is your own fault," said Lady Ann ;
 "are you not of age to know *what* will do
 you good or *what* will do you harm?"

"That is as it may happen," retorted
 he, sulkily ; and, pouring out the tea into
 his saucer, he remained silent.

"Poh ! what a spoilt child you are!"
 said his mother, fondly tapping his cheek,
 "I hope Lady Ann will not indulge you
 as I have done."

"Indeed, Madam, I shall never endan-
 ger his humour by any such trials," she re-
 plied, "for it *has*, and ever will *be* my
 opinion, that men were formed to be *our*
 slaves, and not *our masters*.—Am I right,
 Arthur?"

"No, by G—;" replied he, "but,
 right or wrong, the thing is *done*, and we
 must make the best of it."

The

The thread of Sir Frederick's fine spun compliment had been broken, and he seized upon this occasion to reunite it.

"Make the best of it!" he repeated. "Why surely, Arthur, such a fate as your's can stand in no need of philosophy, unless it be to teach you *moderation*, in supporting your felicity in being husband to the *beautiful* daughter and *sole* heiress of Lord Ben-vour."

They both burst into a loud laugh. "Oh, Lord!" cried Lady Ann, "my *beauty* may stand the test; but, as to my *money*, I positively never expect a single shilling from my father! he is one of the most unreasonable *old Quizes* you ever met with: here I *am*, and you must do with me as you can."

"Well, my dear," replied Lady Isleworth, delighting in the *wit* of her new relation,

relation, "we shall with pleasure provide you an establishment not unworthy your birth and accomplishments."

Sir Frederick stared—Arthur whistled—Lady Ann smiled—and Clarissa blushed, from a consciousness, no doubt, of her mother's total inability to perform, even in little, what she had promised so largely.

"Pray, Arthur, have you and Lady Ann," asked Sir Frederick, "written to my Lord on the subject of your marriage; it has now taken place six days, and I should hope you have not neglected so necessary a duty."

"O yes," replied her ladyship, "we have written, I assure you."

"Well, and what does he say?" asked the Baronet, eagerly.

"Oh!"

"Oh!" cried her unembarrassed ladyship, "*that* question has put me in mind of the most comical story you ever heard in your life; *besides*, it is so applicable, you must allow me to repeat it: An old nurse, dandling on her knee a poor little squalling brat just popped into the world, asked it a thousand nonsensical questions, among the rest, what they had given it to eat? The babe of course said nothing. So some wit sent it about for a miracle, that when nurse asked the question, the child answered *Nothing at all*. Now, you cannot think how many fools I have made on the foundation of this jest; but I only tell it you as being exactly my father's answer to the mournful ditty of repentance, duty, and all *that*, which Arthur and I sent him, as *soon* as the blacksmith parson had converted two idiots into one fool!"

The story having ended with a violent fit of laughter, Lady Isleworth again declared

clared her approbation of Lady Ann's talents for humour; and indeed it was the *only* quarter through which it was *possible* she could receive applause: Sir Frederick was struck dumb: Mr. Isleworth continued looking at some memorandums he had noted down on a Newmarket calendar, of course did not attend either to the tale or to the relater. As to Clarissa, her eyes were fixed on her father, with that pity-moving expression as if she would have said, "*Alas! Sir, I am sure you are unhappy.*"

Lady Isleworth, seeing every face but her own and Lady Ann's dressed in the unbecoming mode of consideration, began to complain of the disagreeable effects which the disappointment of Lady Bridget's revival to life had left on her spirits; and begged, if her husband did not desire to see her again reduced to the same extremity from which she had so lately recovered,

covered, *all serious* subjects might at present be dismissed; "besides, I must go," said she, "to MAYO, my upholsterer, and order furniture for Lady Ann Isleworth's apartment: *indeed* I am petrified with shame that she should have passed the night in a place so ill-fitted for *her* reception."

CHAP. XII.

PLEASURES OF IMAGINATION.

BESIDES the *certain* advantages which this house of fashion enjoyed, by engrafting a noble branch on the stock of their own gentility, there were other honours, other emoluments, not *quite* so certain, but which afforded, in contemplation, a great deal of matter for hope to build on.

The imagination of projectors, *such* projectors as Sir Frederick and Lady Isleworth, may be compared to a shallow stream, on whose bosom is continually floating a succession of green leaves, golden-coloured straws, and silver-coloured feathers, which cheat the eyes of a fool, but

but engages not the attention of a wise man.

Years had this contriving pair been planning matches for Clarissa, which something or other always happened to interrupt. As to the young lady herself, who, as she grew in stature, beauty, and sweetness, became the idol of all the young men about town—to *her* neither their parents or guardians *could* have framed any reasonable objection; but there was a fatal rock, not to be hid from the eyes of any body *less* blind than a man whom love has effectually hoodwinked; and such objects are seldom let to wander alone; some experienced guide generally attends their footsteps, to point out the shoals and quicksands of poverty, the traces of which it was impossible should be concealed, by any artifice, from peeping out in the shattered finances of the Isleworth family.

Lord

Lord Clarence, two winters preceding the commencement of my history, saw and admired Clarissa. Many things were in favour of this match, with only *one* against it—he *was* an earl, he *was* rich, he *was* independent, *but* he *was* already married; and whether it happened that he did not *chuse* to adopt the present mode of engaging *one* wife to fill the place of another, before *that* other has vacated, or whether he saw in the modest mein of Miss Isworth that any proposition of the sort would be received with the scorn and contempt it would have merited, he refrained from declaring his passion; and, to avoid temptation, took his invalid *cara sposa* into the country, from whence he no more returned until he had seen his countess decently interred; and whiled away the first solitary months of widowhood, not in shedding hypocritical tears over her ashes, but in counting the weeks, the days, the hours, when with propriety he might go back to town

town and offer himself to the acceptance of Clarissa, whose lovely image accompanied his imagination in all its flights.

It would be too much to say he came, he saw, he conquered; yet he did *come*, he did *see*, but the conquest remained doubtful.

By Sir Frederick and Lady Isleworth his lordship was received as a blessing least expected, and at a time the most acceptable; not that he had opened the siege in form; however, it must be confessed, he was set down before the citadel, with such an army of sighs, ogles, and attentions, as to much *less* critical observers would fully have explained the nature of his visits to Portman Square.

Clarissa herself was the last to understand what was his *real* meaning; but, *when* her mother pulled the bandage from her eyes with

with which indifference had bound them—*when* she could no longer plead ignorance of Lord Clarence's partiality, without calling in question the veracity of her parents, who a hundred times a day congratulated her on the certainty of an establishment, brilliant, even beyond their hopes—*when* she considered their perseverance in any scheme of aggrandizement, and the warmth of his lordship's pursuit, she trembled at her own situation, and her heart sickened with sadness, bordering on despair.

At the period when Arthur introduced Lady Ann Isleworth to his family, poor Clarissa was deprived of the only real friend she could be said *ever* to have possessed.

Mr. Curry's affection for his adopted daughter continued lively and fervent as in the days of her childhood. On her part, though *every* one of her thoughts, or

perhaps of her actions, as she sailed down the stream of dissipation, signet-like, on the feathers of her mother swan, may *not* have been so irreproachable as to make her un-fearful of his censure, lay them unreservedly before him, *yet* there were few exceptions on which she did not consult his judgment and follow his counsel, particularly when beginning to fear the approaches of Lord Clarence. Ah! with what speed would she have flown to hush her throbbing apprehensions in his fatherly tenderness, to have asked his advice, and to have followed his *directions*, if an insuperable bar had not already arisen to separate her from that one only *but* certain source of consolation.

Mr. Curry's visits for many years were frequent and well received in Portman-square; but, about six months before death had released Lord Clarence from the pains and penalties of wedlock, it so happened that the guardian father of Miss Hleworth
called

called at the house, when none of the family were visible but Clarissa herself.

He found her languid, depressed, debilitated—the wreck of beauty, and the martyr of dissipation!

Looking at her with an air of tender compassion, he shook his head, and asked the cause of her faded complexion, her heavy eyes, and irritated nerves; for, as she presented her hand to his touch, it seemed to tremble with the palsy of fourscore.

Clarissa candidly confessed, that in obeying the *commands* of her mother she had made a sacrifice of no less than her whole stock of health and spirits: “I have not,” said she, “been in bed for many nights! I have not laid down my poor aching head on the pillow of rest before your hour of rising.”

He heard, he pitied, he loved, and he hoped to serve her, by using his influence with Lady Isleworth to ease her daughter from some of those labours with which pleasure taxes her votaries, when they misuse her service, by making it a toil instead of relaxation.

The good old gentleman deferred not his *eclaircissement*, but seized on the first favourable opportunity to awaken the fears of Lady Isleworth for the *life* of her daughter; a liberty so much resented by this high-spirited woman, that in defiance of interest, gratitude, and all other obstacles, she forbade him to intermeddle in *her* family affairs—hinted, that his *future* calls would be dispensed with—and, on pain of her eternal displeasure, commanded Clarissa never more to hold converse with so vulgar a *cit*, who ought to confine himself to his counting-house, without presuming to profane, by his *awkward* presence, the elegant

elegant refinements, only calculated for the *very first* classes—people of birth and education! Which imperious interdiction was the death-blow of all that remained to Clarissa of *real* tranquillity: she wept—she intreated, but all to no purpose.

She would even have disregarded the maternal injunction as a lesser evil than renouncing the friend who had every claim to her filial respect, and more than filial affection; but *that* friend loved her too sincerely to *sanction* an act of disobedience, however amiable may be the source from whence it originated.

For her sake alone Mr. Curry made no shew of the resentment which he could not *but* feel, at an affront so little consonant to what his conscious, upright, honest heart had taught him to expect: all the notice he took of Lady Isleworth's impertinence

was to obey her orders, avoid her house; and, instead of seeing his favourite Clarissa, to content himself by thinking of her, with now and then making such enquiries about her, from their common acquaintance, as oftener procured him pain than satisfaction. No body could tell him that Miss Isleworth looked *well*, but every body could inform him she was, as usual, to be seen with her mother at all fashionable places of public or private amusement.

Such as I have just related was the untoward predicament in which stood the two families of Isleworth and Curry, when, more from necessity than choice, Sir Frederick was forced, by the derangement of his affairs, to make a first advance towards a reconciliation.

A worthy man will never relax in the laws of hospitality, though it be an enemy
that

that seeks the shelter of his roof. Mr. Curry on this score received the Baronet with politeness.

Yet would he not consent to relinquish the trust reposed in him by the father of Lady Isleworth, because such a compliance ill assorted with his notions of rectitude : he also agreed to become the purchaser of his Westmoreland estate, at an advanced price, and, as we have already said, paid down a thousand pounds deposit-money, on a second visit from Sir Frederick to announce the decease of his aunt Lady Bridget ; yet, amongst many proofs of civility, nay kindness, with which he dismissed his *old* acquaintance but *new* guest, he did not condescend to accept a very pressing invitation to renew his visits in Portman-square.

Speaking, as above, of the thousand pounds, puts me in mind, that it is time

we should now go back to the breakfast-room, and see how the dissatisfied party disposed of themselves for the rest of the morning; I mean to be understood from the hours of three to six, the more early ones being entered on night's calendar, by such people of ton who are at the pains to calculate time or seasons.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

THE HONEY MOON IN ITS FIRST
QUARTER.

LADY ISLEWORTH arose in great haste from the arm-chair next the fire, in which she had been seated, because Lady Ann had previously refused to fill it, saying, with a laugh, as Sir Frederick was handing her to the post of honour, “that she was not yet intitled to have the *ease* of her situation so *particularly* consulted.”

“Ring the bell, Clarissa,” said her mother, as she stepped forwards to take a survey of her person in the glass.

The bell was rung—a servant entered, and her coach was ordered.

"I shall leave Arthur and Clarissa to amuse you, my dear Lady Ann," continued she, addressing herself to the bride, "whilst I go amongst my friends to announce our felicity, and to my tradespeople, to provide for your accommodation."

"Oh, heavens!" exclaimed Lady Ann, "be merciful and take us with you! I have all possible friendship for my sister Clary; but, to be left behind with *only* her and one's *husband*, the idea is insupportable! How ridiculous Arthur and I should feel ourselves, if Miss Isleworth happens to be called away in your absence, and we left alone to all the miseries of a *tête-à-tête*! No, Madam, you cannot intend to be so inhuman."

"You need not disturb my mother's plans on *that* account," replied Arthur, "for in half an hour I shall be off for Newmarket."

Newmarket, where I ought to have been many days ago :—you stopped my course *once*, but I'll be d—d if any female in Britain shall ever again play me the same trick."

"Well, go your own way, incorrigible *Orson*," said her lively ladyship, "and if you do but make your pilgrimage decently *long*, I might possibly be *glad* to see you again when you come back."

"As you please," cried he, "Good bye;" and ran out of the room, whilst his father followed; and, overtaking him in the hall, desired to exchange a few words with him in private. Arthur did not much like the restraint thus laid on his speed; he submitted with an ill grace; they adjourned together, and Sir Frederick opened the business.

“ I fear, Sir, you have made a *bad* hand of it,” said he, “ in taking the daughter of Lord Benvour *without* the consent of her father, who I know to be a cursed obstinate fellow.”

“ I fear so *too*,” replied the son, “ and if there was any cure in *repentance* for the *sin* of matrimony, I should certainly adopt it. But, Sir, give me leave *now* to pursue my more *agreeable* engagements: Lord Turfover and Jack Bypost wait for me at Tatterfall’s: the cursed matter you would speak upon will take up more time than I *can* spare. I have bets depending to the tune of a thousand, and I shall be thrown out of my chance if I delay my journey.”

“ Necessity has no law!” observed the Baronet, “ go then, and may fortune speed the plough! If you are successful, I charge you send me by express five hundred pounds,

pounds, which I have immediate need for, to get out of the damn'dest scrape I ever experienced."

"Depend on me, *if in my power*," said Arthur, and off he went; whilst Sir Frederick returned to take up his hat, intending to make a third visit to Curry; but on so mortifying an errand, that had it been in his own election, he would rather have gone a hundred miles any other way. He met, as he was going back, Lady Ann, dragging Clarissa towards the billiard-room, who had reluctantly consented to divert her ladyship, in the absence of her mother, with a game which *she* did not understand, *but* on which her sister protested *she* doted to distraction.

Arthur, being once got clear of his father's house, little imagined that any other impediment would be thrown in the path of his appointment. Yet an impediment
did.

did start up, which, with all his strength, he could not have jumped over, but that he had just before replenished his famished purse with all that he could be certain to touch of Lord Benvour's enviable riches.

Lady Ann had received from her father's steward the half of her yearly stipend, which amounted to two hundred and fifty guineas, the day preceding her elopement; and, possessed of this sum, together with a few valuable jewels, she turned her back upon the *Wilderness*. The odd fifty was scattered in making their way to and from Gretna Green, Mr. Isleworth having indifferently provided himself with the *possibles* for such an expedition. The round two hundred fortunately remained, and were still more fortunately reposing in the pocket of Arthur, when the sure hand of law fell upon his shoulder, within sight of the house he had just quitted.

In

In plainer terms, he was arrested upon an action which warranted every species of severity, having contracted a debt of ninety-five pounds for a diamond-ring, in his minority, which debt, though master of some hundreds on coming of age, he manfully refused to pay.

Right or wrong, the exasperated tradesman determined to lay hold of him; and the event shewed how well he judged the matter; for Arthur, who would have knocked the officer down, if he could have turned his time to no better account, thus attacked in the midst of his pressing engagements, not only paid the bill, but gave the fellow ten pieces of gold to divide between himself and the cost of the suit; after which he happily joined his two friends at Tatterfall's, took a whet of brandy, drank confusion to law-makers and law-executioners, cursed their grooms for faults they had not committed,

committed, and, in high spirits galloped away towards Newmarket, where, if a man pays but at the rate of twenty-shillings for every pound of flesh his racers carry on their bones, that man is better off than his neighbours.

Sir Frederick Isleworth, without once lifting his eyes above the pavement, in his long walk from Portman-square to New Bond-street, might, in the moments of his peregrination, have been mistaken for a man of *reflection*: indeed, if he ever thought in his whole life, this was certainly the season for thinking.

A thousand pounds to refund! and only half that sum out of which it could be refunded!—what to do, and what to say, afforded him, in a poetical phrase, “food for contemplation, even to madness.”

Buried

Buried in a sleep-like reverie, he did not see many of his acquaintance who met or passed him, neither did his plodding pace or studious features serve as a herald to proclaim him a man of *pleasure*, one person only could distinguish *that* character through all its disguises.

“It is surely him!—it is surely him!” exclaimed a fine looking woman, with a footman walking behind her at a respectful distance, on the opposite side of the street, to which Sir Frederick was crossing—then paused, and again cried out, “Yes, I swear it is Sir Frederick himself!”

Had any accents but those of Mrs. *Snug* announced him, in his haste to get forward, he might not have honoured the exclamation with any degree of attention; but, roused by the well-known dulcet voice of his syren, what he thought the most happy
idea

idea his wisdom ever engendered, made him spring almost into her arms, begging to know, with undescribable agitation, whether she had disposed of the money he had supplied her with the day before?

“To be sure I have!” replied the lady, somewhat startled, “but why do you enquire?”

“Only, my dear creature! if you *could* grant me the loan of it, *just* for eight and forty hours, you will do me a *very* singular service.”

“And myself singular pleasure,” replied the sprightly dame, recovering from her surprise, “*if it was in my power*; but, pray remember, that my *husband’s* necessities is a sinking-fund, that swallows up all the riches *I* can gather together.”

The

The disappointed lover cursed *all* husbands, but—her's in particular. However, as no time was now to be wasted on barren subjects, they made an assignation to meet again in two days, and separated.

CHAP. XIV.

ARRANGEMENT.

IT would be difficult to describe what were the feelings of Sir Frederick as he approached the merchant's door; they were such as can be only understood by a proud man, who, in struggling with poverty, loses what is more valuable to him than life itself, *his* consequence, *his* hauteur, *his* importance! or, to speak allegorically, one who is forced to lay down his costly robe of ostentation, and to cloath himself in the plain garb of humility.

The knocker trembled in his hand—the door opened—Mr. Curry was at home—and he followed the servant into the presence of his master, who got up to receive him,

him, with so much cordiality in his manner, so much benevolence in his countenance, that the Baronet began to take courage; and the hearty shake of his hand, which gave him the welcome he had reason to despair of, was returned with equal warmth, if not equal sincerity.

“I thank you,” said the merchant, as soon as they were seated, “for this early visit: I see you fine gentlemen can be punctual when business is to be settled. I have appointed my lawyer to meet you here in half an hour; our bargain will soon be completed; after which we will go to the bank, where I shall make a transfer to *you* of the sum agreed on for your Westmoreland estate.—You are silent,” continued he, “perhaps you repent of your bargain? If that should be the case, I shall not insist on your fulfilling it.”

Sir

Sir Frederick was silent, for no other reason than that he did not know what to say. The offer of letting him off restored him to speech; he started up—stood with his back to the fire—looked down on his buckles—took out his snuff-box—and, as he opened the lid, he opened his mouth also.

“My dear Sir,”—he lifted his hand to his nose—“this is execrable snuff!—I have done myself the *honor*, my dear Sir, to attend your levee this morning, *on* the most detestable occasion you can possibly imagine! I am shocked to tell you, that our agreement *must* dissolve, not from any caprice of my own,”—suppressing an oath, “no, my very good friend, I was but too happy in your generous proceedings; *but* a fatal accident has happened since I saw you last, that makes it impossible for me to profit by them.”

Here

Here he was interrupted—Mr. Curry felt himself alarmed lest his favourite Clarissa might some how or other be involved in the accident Sir Frederick seemed so truly to lament, and asked him eagerly if Miss Ifleworth was well?

He slightly answered, “Yes, very well;” and proceeded to explain the resurrection of Lady Bridget, treating the subject with more sorrow than he would have bestowed on the memory of his wife and children, had the sword or pestilence swept them all away from the face of the earth; but when, with mortified looks, and almost with tears of contrition, he revealed his incapacity to repay the thousand pounds advanced in part of the purchase, *this* was the remarkable answer he received from the blunt but noble minded merchant.

“Sir Frederick, you are not only welcome to the money you have spent, but
also

also to a second thousand, on no other security than your own note, if such a loan will be serviceable to you."

"Do I construe you right, my good Sir!" cried the astonished Sir Frederick, "is it possible, my dear Mr. Curry, that you should *certainly* intend me so *capital* an obligation!—a favour so much above my hopes, my expectations, my deserts!" He might have continued longer in the same strain, if my *good* sir, my *dear* Mr. Curry, had not laid an embargo on the fluency of his expressions, by again declaring it was his *full* intent and *meaning* to accommodate him with the sum specified.—"But," added he, "I do *not* tell you that I shall advance it *unconditionally*."

"I understand you," said the Baronet, my son *shall* join in the security."

"I have

“ I have already told you, Sir Frederick,” he replied, “ that I will accept *no* other security than your *own* note. But we men of business never part with our money unless for interest or premium :—*interest* I relinquish, *premium* I expect.”

“ Take it then, for thou art an honest fellow !” cried out the delighted Baronet ; “ keep back half ; give me another five hundred, and I will acknowledge myself your debtor for *two* thousand ! And now, my dear friend, let us close the bargain *this* moment, that I may carry the money to Lady Isleworth, who tells me twenty times a day that she is in want of a thousand necessaries.”

“ Sir, you miscomprehend me,” said the merchant, calmly, “ I have indeed signified my expectation of a *premium*, but it must be of my *own* naming ; and I shall tell you before hand, I shall ask what is of

more value than the two thousand pounds I am ready to lend you, ten times counted over."

Sir Frederick started, and again applied to his snuff-box, saying coldly, and in a tone of displeasure, "I profess, *Mister* Curry, I do not understand you."

"Then Sir," he replied, "give me your attention for ten minutes, and I hope to explain myself to your satisfaction." Sir Frederick bowed *stately*, and the merchant proceeded.

The tale he told would have interested any other hearer; *but* Sir Frederick listened per force, and betrayed no symptom of animation till it was brought to a conclusion; except that turning his face in disgust to the fire, and biting his nails almost to the quick, he sometimes uttered a hasty sarcasm on men who did not know their own
minds,

minds, and a damn on his own involvements, which made him subservient to their changes. But these sounds of discontent being only the birth of a whisper, they ascended the chimney, without touching upon the ear of Mr. Curry, whose tale, for brevity's sake, I shall take leave to curtail.

CHAP. XV.

ALL IS WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

THE merchant informed Sir Frederick, that he had a sister lately arrived from India, the widow of an officer, a man of rank, who for many years enjoyed the first command at Bengal;—that the death of her husband having broken the ties which held her from her native land, she was come back to her family, with a sad heart and shattered constitution.

“ I will no longer,” added he, “ hold out the language of an usurer; *if* you do *me* the honour to accept a favour, I shall do myself the pleasure to *solicit* one of far greater consequence—the company of Miss Isleworth

Isleworth for a few weeks, or as long a time as you can consent to part with her, I am most ambitious to obtain for the beloved sister of whom I have been speaking, and to whom I never shall be able to present a gift so precious as such a companion, who will have the goodness to forward the recovery of her health, cherish its first dawn, and sooth her sorrows."

"And is this really *all* that you require of me!" said Sir Frederick, brightening into rapture. "Why, at this rate, my good friend, you make me doubly your debtor. *Clarissa* shall attend your sister either in town or country, as soon as she is ready to receive her; *but* how long she may continue her guest it is not in my power to say—that depends on circumstances; we have a brilliant establishment in view for her, the event of which must determine the length of her visit."

Afterwards the conversation was lengthened by Sir Frederick's giving Mr. Curry the history of Arthur's marriage, and explaining the nature of his views for Clarissa; which being ended, they parted, with much good humour on one side, and much joy on the other, the merchant having presented the Baronet with a second bank note. Consonant to his plans, and suppressing his own impatience, he consented also not to call upon him for the performance of his promise, till Lady Isleworth had given herself a ball, and Lord Clarence an opportunity to declare himself the lover of Clarissa, which, Mr. Curry archly observed, would be killing two birds with one stone. I hardly know how to say whether he *did* or did *not* wish success to the latter part of this *family* enterprise; for, though it was very certain he was warmly interested in the happy establishment of Miss Isleworth, yet it is altogether *as* certain that he had no particular predilection

predilection in favour of nobility by the *lump*, nor did he think a peer better or wiser than another man, *unless* the benevolence of his heart, *and* the prudence of his actions, decidedly gave him the precedence.

Sir Frederick, lightly measuring his steps homeward, called his thoughts to council on a very important question, whether it would be wisest, discreetest, best, to let Lady Isleworth into the transaction of the morning? or, by smothering the whole affair, keep possession of his newly acquired wealth, without being forced to divide it on the score of domestic exigencies? If he buried in his own breast the good-natured generosity of Curry, there could be no opening for him to divulge *his* part of the agreement, or to obtain the consent of her ladyship that Clarissa should make good his engagement, which, when disclosed, he apprehended would raise *some* troublesome al-

tercation; and, if he was a coward on the occasion, most married men will be able to enter experimentally into the nature of his timidity.

He paused—he reasoned—he ruminated; at length, remembering that he had an evening appointment for high play, his wavering judgment settled into something like decision; and he resolved not *entirely* to conceal his good fortune, but so far to temporize with it, as to acknowledge her guardian's politeness in not demanding *that* half of the deposit-money already spent; and this he thought a sufficient communication to obtain her concurrence with his plans, especially as they had been arranged so cautiously, that Clarissa's rusticating would by no means interfere with their designs upon Lord Clarence; “for,” said he, as he pursued his way, talking to himself, as men of pleasure sometimes will do,—“for,” said he, “if Lord Clarence does
not

not lay hold of the opportunity *we* give him to speak *out*, he has no serious mind to the girl; and if he *does* declare himself, he may visit her in any other place as well as in Portman-square."

This was his last determination, and his last expression, as he stopped at his own door, just in time to offer his hand to Lady Isleworth, who was at that moment stepping out of her carriage.

And here I also stop to apologise for having sent Arthur to Newmarket, the young ladies to the billiard-table, and attending Sir Frederick to the city, without having yet endeavoured to trace her ladyship's wheels through their various circumvolutions, with this *only* excuse to offer for so palpable an omission, *namely*, that I never in my life had a capacity to do or say more than one thing at a time: but as dili-

gence is in some cases a remedy for neglect, I shall now pursue, and try to overtake, the straggling moments that have escaped me.

Lady Isleworth began this eventful morning at the wrong end of business. The first call she made was at Mr. Mayo's the upholsterer, where she gave orders for a suit of silk damask hangings, state-bed, and as many other little necessaries, for the accommodation of Lady Ann, as, when entered on that fashionable tradesman's book, would have cut a dashing figure; to which sort of dash her ladyship was so far from raising objections, that it was never her custom to ask the price of *any* thing, but to order *every* thing; "such scrutinies," she would observe, "became only the vulgar, and, when adopted by genteel people, brought them nearly on a level."

With

With a million of charges to have her newly purchased articles sent home as expeditiously as possible, she was tripping through the shop, when her attention being suddenly arrested by a curious chair, which she had not taken notice of before, she turned back to give it a second look, when a screen of equal beauty divided her admiration: the temptation was not to be resisted; the chairs would be wanted at her grand gala—the screens were *divine*, and she *could* not do without them; of course they were added to her list of *necessaries*.

The heads of her horses were now turned towards the city; but in her way to Parker's, in Fleet-street, she stopped at many other shops; and, as far as one can be said to buy without laying out money, she bought silks, flowers, and feathers, to a large amount.

The last object that hung itself out to catch her notice was suspended from a pawn-broker's window—it was a watch and chain studded with diamonds. “Ah!” cried she, “what a sweet present for Lady Ann!” Her eyes sparkled with the pleasant idea;—she pulled the check, and sent one of her tall footmen (for she had two behind her carriage) to bring the man and the watch *that* moment before her.

A little figure, more like a weasel than a man, obeyed the summons. She eagerly caught the trinket from his shaking hand, put it in her pocket, and, bidding the servant give him a card of direction, ordered herself to be conveyed to Parker's.

The diminutive feller of second-hand finery, gasping with agony for the fate of his toy, demanded to have it returned, or immediate payment of one hundred guineas,

neas, which was the price affixed to it on a scrap of paper, but which had passed by her ladyship's observation.

Finding the trader would have the *watch* or the *money*, she gave him back the former, the latter not being in her possession, and with an air of sovereign contempt, bad him learn how to treat people of *quality*, who condescended to stop at his little dirty *den* of a shop. The man only *grinned* a reply, and carried off the disputed prize in triumph.

It may tire a reader's patience, were we to detain him at every door where it was the pleasure of Lady Isleworth either to get out of her coach or to give her directions from within. We will therefore content ourselves with merely saying, that her ladyship remained so long at Parker's in chusing lustres for her ball-room, that when
she

she came home and was met at the door by Sir Frederick, the first bell had given notice that a dinner was provided, which, *all* things considered, is not to be set down as one of those common occurrences which daily happen in families of irregularity.

CHAP. XVI.

A NEW CHARACTER.

LORD CLARENCE, the only guest invited to their table on this memorable day, rushed out of his chariot, ten minutes after Sir Frederick with the three ladies had sat down at table—was presented to the *bride*—paid his compliments to *every* body—particularized nobody—and, with the familiar well-bred ease of fashion, threw himself into a chair, purposely placed by the side of Miss Isleworth.

Clarissa turned pale or red at every insignificant sentence which, in the course of a general conversation, he undesignedly addressed

addressed to herself; but whether these sudden variations of countenance proceeded from approbation or disgust, is a secret that will be disclosed in the future pages of this history.

Lord Clarence was tall, thin, and far from being inelegant—his features not bad, and his countenance expressive; but that expression had more in it of pride, than passions of any kind, particularly of the *tender* sort; yet his heart was really occasionally susceptible of the softest, though not of the most *lasting* impressions;—his manners were unexceptionable, at least they were universally pleasing; as, with much study, he had obtained the exclusive privilege of adapting them to all conditions of man, but more especially of womankind:—his general character may be comprised in two short sentences—by his own sex he was called a damn'd *knowing* fellow for a lord;

lord ; and by the other, a dear dangerous creature, with whom it was more safe to trust their *purses* than their *hearts*.

His Lordship, enquiring for his friend Arthur, and being told that a few hours before he had taken a trip to Newmarket, his large black penetrating eyes cast a side-long glance at Lady Ann, as if for the first time he had thought it worth his while to take a survey of her pretensions to beauty. No glance, however side-long, could pass unnoticed by the person to whom it was directed. *Too* much a woman of *ton* to be troubled with any thing like *mauvaise honte*, she caught at the silent expression, and explained its meaning, by asking him, “ when *he* was a *married* man, whether he liked to be fastened to his wife’s side like her watch-chain ? ”

His lordship, who perhaps was thinking of something else, started, and even coloured,

loured, at the abruptness of her question ; but, as the reply was not seasoned with an equal quantity of *attic salt*, we shall not force it on the palate of our readers.

Clarissa engrossed more of the noble visitor's attention than she seemed to desire, or would have received with her usual politeness, had not the looks of her father and mother, which perpetually scrutinized the least of her motions, kept her in awful submission ; the heaving sigh was suppressed, and the tear that struggled in her eye was forbidden to flow ; yet, through the thickest covering she could throw over her feelings, a common observer might have read this inscription on her countenance—*My heart is not at ease.*

Lady Ann certainly was not over and above delighted with the visible preference given to her sister-in-law, and contrived to make herself very pleasant, and the object
of

of her envy *very* unpleasant, by turning them both into ridicule, declaring, that if Arthur Isleworth had ever shewn a *marked* preference to *her* in public, or even in a private circle, she should have *bated* him—ending with a broad laugh at those prudish girls (glancing at Clarissa) who set up to receive their lovers with all the formality of a school-mistress, and all the insensibility of an automaton.

Sir Frederick tried to give the conversation another turn—talked of the present war—of the last new opera—of horse-racing—and the bench of bishops.

Lady Isleworth, still paying the greatest deference to her daughter-in-law, but fearing my Lord might be displeased with her flippancy, volunteered in the service of dividing his attention, and stunned her hearers with a confused medley of the fatigues

tigues of shopping—the impertinent delays of trades-people—the carelessness of coachmen—the stupidity of footmen—of her own indefatigable labours—of her own purchases—of her own cleverness—and, last of all, of her own intended ball; which very naturally put it into the head of Lord Clarence to remind Clarissa she had promised to be his partner, adding something very tender, but in so low a whisper as made it optional whether she would or would not make any *serious* use of his professions; and she chose the latter, pretending not to have heard them.

When the ladies withdrew after dinner, Miss Isleworth, recollecting that she had not seen her two little sisters for the whole day, ran up to the nursery, and, in her absence, gave an opportunity to her mother of displaying a great deal of eloquence at *her* expence.

Bitterly

Bitterly did she complain to Lady Ann of Clarissa's late change in person, manners, and humour; her vehemence alone might have convinced even a deaf observer how little she was satisfied. Lady Ann wanted neither ears, eyes, or relish, for such spirited railings, when lavished on a *rival* beauty, or a *dear* friend, the convenient appellation for young ladies who love by *profession* and hate by *instinct*. Every fault imputed to the *favorite* of Lord Clarence, acted upon the diseased mind of Lady Ann, like Bristol milk on a consumptive habit of body.

“I can in no manner account for so extraordinary a revolution,” cried Lady Isleworth, “it is absolute witchcraft! Did you ever see a complexion so faded? Her skin was *once* remarkably white, and see! what is it *now* but chalk?—absolute chalk! Then her person—do but look at her person!

son! six months ago she was just such a figure as myself, but there is *now* no vestige of grace remaining! Would you believe, Lady Ann, that, with all the authority of a mother, I am not able to make her dress like *other* people! or will she be persuaded to put on rouge!—it is impossible to give you any idea of her obstinacy.”

“It is impossible,” replied the other, shrugging her shoulders, “that any hints from your ladyship should make me wiser than I am. I know Clary is stubborn—and I am sure she is in love!”

“In love!” then it must be with my Lord Clarence.”

“With Lord Clarence! no, I will be sworn she has no partiality for his lordship.”

“Nay,

“Nay, Lady Ann, it can be with no body else, as she *knows* Sir Frederick and I are *determined* she shall marry him.”

“Lord! my dear Lady Isleworth, what can *that* signify? Remember, I *foretold* that she will reject the husband of *your* choice, and take the man of her *own*.”

The lovely subject of this chit chat that moment came into the room, leading in each hand a pretty little girl, who for the first time were presented to Lady Ann, and graciously received; she not only saluted them very kindly, but also paid them the particular compliment of saying, she hated *all* children *but* themselves. Their mother, *too*, condescended to bid them hold up their heads; and, telling them, when their elder sisters had got husbands it would be *their* turn *next*, sent them back to their nursery.

Mean

Mean time the father of Clarissa, and his noble guest, being left alone, the former pushed about the bottle, as one man will do by another when any designs are formed against his purse or his understanding.

Sir Frederick had watched the peer's looks, and saw his eyes following the steps of his daughter, as she left the room, with a mixture of tenderness and energy, that gave cause to hope the present opportunity would be as well as *another* to bring him to the destined confession; with which view he filled bumper after bumper, until he thought his lordship in a proper *cue* for founding.

“Come, my Lord,” said he, in a jocular tone, “I will give you a *sentiment*, which I am persuaded no widower in Britain would refuse to pledge;”—he drew towards him a larger glass than he had used before, which
he

he made to run over, and, taking hold of Clarence's hand, he drank—" *Let all the single be married, and let all the married be happy!*"

"An excellent toast!" cried his lordship, "I double your libation!" and at one draught swallowed down a pint bumper of Madeira.

All might have done well, had the Baronet's scheme on the senses of his passive guest ended here; but in striving to captivate them *in toto*, he surrendered his own. They were differently affected, yet both too much crippled to enter the walk of business. Sir Frederick became capricious without meaning—the noble Peer, silent, without design: the former staggered off, with notes in his pocket for fifteen hundred pounds, to make *something* or *nothing* of them, at a noted gaming-house;—the latter found his

way to the drawing-room, sat down by the side of Clarissa, and fell asleep.

If he was not before *exceedingly* desirable in the eyes of his mistress, his present ridiculous situation did not serve to render him more amiable. But so unlike to each other are the minds of women, that the same scene which disgusted Miss Isleworth delighted her mother and Lady Ann, who played a hundred tricks to rouse him from his stupor. Clarissa took no part in their amusement. Her mother would not permit her to retire, as she wished to have done; therefore she withdrew to a distant corner of the room, entertained herself with a book, and left them to pursue their frolicks on the inanimate corps of poor Lord Clarence.

Some of the many remedies they used to restore his senses at last took effect; he
awaked

awaked in confusion not to be described—
stammered out an apology—reeled towards
Clarissa, and, against all possible resistance,
imprinted on her fair hand the feverish
kiss of inebriety—then vanished out of the
room, to which he returned no more.

CHAP. XVII.

WHICH HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE
TITLE OF THIS BOOK.

MR. CURRY had a country-house on Enfield Chase, to which he had taken his sister on her arrival from India, not more for the benefit of air, than to afford her that sort of agreeable solitude a rational woman, who has passed her grand climacteric, will always prefer to busy scenes of irrational dissipation.

Mrs. St. Edmonds was one of the few women who come under the description of *rational*: she distinguished *real* from counterfeit enjoyments, therefore chose the substance and rejected the shadow. She had been an excellent daughter—sister—wife,
in

in defiance of the keen taunts with which fashion will ever ridicule those duties it does not sanction.

On the day of General St. Edmonds's death, the thirtieth year of their happy union was fully completed; twenty they had passed together in the dominions of their prince, within the boundaries of Europe—the other ten was still devoted to the military service, but in another quarter of the globe, and with unabated ardour. Mrs. St. Edmonds accompanied her husband to Bengal, where his martial glory, and the mildness of his administration, will raise to his memory, in that country, a lasting monument of his valor, mercy, and justice: nor will it ever be forgotten by the inhabitants, that the brightest example of every female virtue was given them, in the irreproachable conduct of the beloved wife of their beloved governor.

To the residence of this lady Mr. Curry directed his steps, or rather the steps of his horses, as soon as the last conference between him and Sir Frederick Isleworth was brought to a conclusion; and how much it ended to the satisfaction of both parties has already been related.

It was almost dark before he got to Enfield. His sister, who expected and had waited dinner for him, began to be uneasy that he was not yet come: her imagination had been busy in forming a thousand accidents that might have befallen him; and the instant he stood before her she chid him, but with a sweetness peculiar to herself, for having so long made her suffer all the pains and penalties that fear, united to fancy, could invent for her torment.

Before he would enter on his defence, he desired dinner might be served, after
which

which there would be time sufficient, he said, to satisfy all her inquiries.

A *tête-à-tête* is generally stigmatized by the appellation of stupid; and when made up of two lovers, who have loved long enough to love themselves out of love—or two fools, who are chained together by necessity—or two persons who call themselves friends, yet spend the hours which should be dedicated to the open frankness of friendship in suspecting each other, in locking up their thoughts, as they would do their riches, if a thief was at the door; in any or all such situations, the term *stupid* is but a poor epithet to express the apathy, folly, or wickedness, of which such *tête-à-têtes* are composed.

On the other hand, though such instances are to be produced, does it follow that two people, whose souls overflow with affection, and whose minds are stored with information—does it follow, I say, that
they

they should grow tired of one another's society, merely because there is not a third person to listen to, or to join in their conversation? As well may we quarrel with nature, and say we cannot use our hands or our feet, because we have but *two* of a sort, and think *three* would have done better. If there are such discontented mortals, the amiable brother and sister of whom I am speaking were certainly out of the number, as they would not have thought their destiny unpleasant, had they been condemned to feast a moiety of their hours on the food of their own eloquence, seasoned with that fraternal tenderness which gives a zest to all domestic entertainments.

“ Well, now, my dear Elizabeth,” said Mr. Curry, the cloth being first removed, “ I will tell you what the business was that detained me so late in London.”

“ Oh ! pray do,” she replied, “ for there is something so mysteriously pleasant in
your

your countenance, that I can assure you my curiosity *was* infinitely greater than my appetite."

"Then, perhaps," returned he, "you have already guessed that you are in part the cause of my playing the truant."

"Me, brother, the cause!" repeated Mrs. St. Edmonds, "how is that possible?"

"Yes, *you* sister; for I have this morning staid in town to make a purchase, which I hope to present very soon to your acceptance."

"With all possible gratitude," cried she, "I am really sorry you should have laid out your *money* on so improper a subject. I have already more finery than I know what to do with; and meant to have asked your recommendation of some young wo-

man, to whom a division of them may be useful."

"Well, well," said her brother, smiling, "perhaps I may do so when I am more at leisure; but the present I have bought for you this day is not to be set down amongst the *trifles* in your possession: you may judge of its value by its cost. What think you of one single jewel, for which I have advanced *two thousand* pounds, and call it the best bargain I ever made in my life."

"Heaven help me, brother!" exclaimed Mrs. St. Edmonds, "what is this riddle you call upon me to explain? I can form *no* idea of your meaning. A jewel that has cost you *two thousand* pounds! and this extravagant purchase made for *me*—for an old figure!—Oh! the tale is too ridiculous to gain credit! Dear George, speak to my understanding, and do not over-tax my credulity!

"There

“ There is something,” he replied, “ so rational in your request, that I should forfeit my claim to candour if I did not tell you the whole honest truth, that you may no longer have cause to suppose I think you a fool, or give you still more reason to consider *me* as a puppy, unfit to be trusted with my own money or my *own* conduct.— Do you remember my little favourite Clarissa Isleworth?”

“ Remember her !” said she, “ yes; and at this distance of time I recall every sweet feature of her cherub face, with much more precision than I can recollect what I myself was thirty years ago. But what of this charming child ? I have often intended to ask you about her; and yet, in the multiplicity of my own affairs, have as often forgot to interest myself in her’s ; you cannot oblige me more than by informing me of her fate—I sincerely hope it has been a happy one.”

“ Her *fate*,” he answered, “ if marriage is to be considered its ultimatum, is not yet decided ; but, if you mean to ask after her present situation and pursuits, I have only to say, they are much of the same nature with those of other young women, whose misfortune it is to have a *fool* for their father, and a *coquette* for their mother.”

“ Ah ! it is a thousand pities,” cried Mrs. St. Edmonds, sighing, “ alas ! then I fear it is all over with your once amiable Clary !”

“ I hope better things,” said her brother. “ Whatever dross her pure mind may have imbibed from education or example, I expect your precepts will rarify hereafter : she is to be your guest for a few weeks, and *much* good may be done in a *little* time. She has every propensity to those virtues which set your sex above all other works

works of the creation, and I think we shall find no great difficulty in calling them into action, though at present I believe they are of a negative species. *This*, my sister, is the jewel of which I boasted—this is the *purchase* I have made; for, in lending the father two thousand pounds that I may obtain the company of his daughter, I have ample cause to warrant my calling it a *gift*, rather than a *loan*! The spendthrift, who will not be just to himself, *can* not be equitable to others.”

“But, my good brother,” said Mrs. St. Edmonds, interrupting him, “are you sure I shall think *so* highly of your jewel as *you* do? or, that your bringing her to visit me will not diminish *from* rather than add *to* my comforts, which are, through your own kindness, already abundant? or, do you not know, that it is the hardest task in the world to domesticate a fine lady? To be plain with you, there is no animal in the
creation,

creation, in my opinion, so little fitted for use or companionship, as the present modern *Misses*, springing from the present modern parents! My situation in India made me know much more of these troublesome girls than I desired to know. Mr. St. Edmonds and I were continually pestered with recommendations. Several of them, whose birth was good and educations fashionable, we received not only under our patronage but under our roof;—allow me to add, that I never was better pleased, both on their accounts and my own, as when *they* got husbands, and *I* got rid of their society.

“I see you smile,” continued she, “but I have not done yet; let me say out *my* say, and then I will permit you to set aside all my objections—if you can. I am willing to agree with you, that Clarissa Isleworth *was* one of the loveliest, the most amiable, and the most fascinating of children—that, *had* she remained under your tuition—*had* my
 dear

dear sister lived long enough to assist you in finishing the work so happily begun, there could be no room for doubting her maturer years would have made good all the promises of infancy. On the contrary, taken from you at an age when young minds are most susceptible of right or wrong impressions, I think there is reason on *my* side for supposing, that all your *early* instructions were superseded by the precepts, and, what is still more forcible, the example of her butterfly mother, whose house if it cannot be called the *residence* of vice, must be considered as the occasional *receptacle* for the votaries of vice. After all, if you have, in your intended acquisition to your small family number, the goodness to consult *my* inclinations, I shall certainly accommodate them to *your* wishes; but when a trial is made, I demand to resign the honour of Miss Isleworth's company, provided we should happen to be dissatisfied with each other."

"Read

“Read that letter, Elizabeth,” cried the merchant, exultingly, presenting a paper which he had taken from his pocket-book at the beginning of this interesting explanation, “and let us see on what your unbiassed judgment will decide, without the interference of partiality.

She received it smilingly.

“You need not read it aloud,” he added, “for I have read it many times, and remember all its contents. It was written in reply to some good advice, concerning *filial* obedience, which I bestowed upon her, finding she was more inclined to break through its laws than to observe them; when, six months ago, Lady Isleworth took it into her head to forbid me any intercourse with *her* family, the poor child applied to me for absolution, if she broke through the *rigid* interdiction.—I said, *No*. And now I make you a judge of her heart,

by

by the answer she returned to my *decided* negative."

"Yes, I shall love this girl, in spite of my former opinions!" muttered Mrs. St. Edmonds, speaking inwardly as she perused the letter, her fine though emaciated figure, and once beautiful countenance, receiving all the advantages that action and animation can impart, "Yes, I shall certainly love her! But, brother," continued she, "I am not content to keep all these pretty sentiments to myself.—I am *your* convert—we must read and admire them together."

"As you please," returned he, visibly delighted; "eloquence may sometimes tire, but goodness *never*."—Then followed the epistle, which may be found in the next chapter.

CHAP. XVIII.

LETTER.

“ **W**HY, my dear Sir, will you command me to preserve *one* duty
 “ at the price of forfeiting *many*? With-
 “ out hardening my heart to the claims of
 “ *nature*, I am equally susceptible to those
 “ of *gratitude*!

“ And is it *you*—is it *really* you, who
 “ can so coldly, I was going to say *cruelly*,
 “ forbid me to throw myself at your feet,
 “ to confess my errors, perhaps—ah! how
 “ cordial the hope!—perhaps to have re-
 “ ceived your forgiveness? Will you not
 “ allow a simple girl, though led astray
 “ from the path into which you early con-
 “ ducted her, to reason with, to persuade
 “ you

“ you out of a purpose so afflicting? Do
 “ not banish from your bosom *her* who
 “ will soon, I fear, have no refuge but in
 “ *your* protection! Do not push off, on an
 “ ocean hard to weather, the poor little
 “ bark you sometimes delighted to deck
 “ with the ensigns of truth and rectitude!
 “ The lustre of these colours may have
 “ been tarnished, but are not yet *utterly*
 “ destroyed. Condescend, only once more,
 “ to become the pilot of your *own* works,
 “ and, though sadly disordered, *your* regu-
 “ lation will restore them to order.

“ When you say you will *not* receive me
 “ at *your* house, though I should have the
 “ hardiness to visit there unsanctioned by
 “ my mother; or call on me at my fa-
 “ ther's, without it be in conformity with
 “ her *express* invitation; when you add—
 “ My dear child, I will never teach you
 “ any lesson where the word *duty* is blot-
 “ ted by contention, much less where it is
 “ *obli-*

“obliterated by *actual* disobedience,”—had
 “you considered, when you pronounced
 “this *hard* sentence, to what a cruel ne-
 “cessity it reduced me—had you reflected
 “on the obligations of filial duty I owe to
 “*yourself*, with the same impartiality that
 “I *do*, you must have confessed, the sacri-
 “fice you would exact from me you did not
 “expect I could perform without grief,
 “without tears, without remonstrating!
 “I do *more* than remonstrate; I write on
 “my bended knees, and intreat, with all
 “the fervour of which my heart is capa-
 “ble, that you will, as usual, admit to
 “your presence, your most grateful, obe-
 “dient, and dutiful daughter,

“CLARISSA ISLEWORTH.”

“You did not, it seems, comply,” said
 Mrs. St. Edmonds, “with the prayer of
 your gentle petitioner; how could you re-
 sist so pathetic a pleader?”

“I sel-

“ I seldom retract from my word, because I seldom give it lightly,” he replied. “ I had well considered her situation—I would have laid down half my possessions to have saved her from unnecessary sorrow ; but, to fill her mind with present ease, I must also have stored it with food for future remorse. So I even sent her word to be a good girl—to depend on my fatherly affection—to keep up her spirits—perform her duty—and expect that I should lay hold on the first opportunity which presented itself, *without* infringement of established preliminaries, to reward the patience with which I *still* hoped she would submit to *my* injunctions.”

“ Well, you are an extraordinary man !” returned his sister, “ *so* much philosophy, *so* much sensibility, *so* much the slave of philanthropy, and yet *so* much the master of your reason ! You have done well ; I should not, I am sure, have done half *so* well.”

well. I know, from the eagerness that now springs up in my heart to embrace *your* favourite, that I must have opened my arms to have received her, had the application been made to *me* instead of yourself."

"I am glad then," said he, "that we are now *all* likely to be satisfied, without any body being to blame; and in less than three weeks, I have no doubt, I shall be able to present her to you."

"And I have no doubt," she rejoined, "I shall love her quite as much as you do."

This sort of conversation, without fatiguing the two persons who supported it, lasted till Mrs. St. Edmonds' repeater announced a quarter past eleven o'clock, an hour not much respected by fashion, but friendly to invalids, in which class, we are sorry to say, this very amiable woman had
long

long been numbered. Mr. Curry tenderly supported her to the door of her chamber, then retired to his own; and the next morning before she was stirring, again set off for the mart of business, leaving orders with the housekeeper to inform his sister, he should return the following day in time for dinner.

It is sometimes the case, that men who are *getting* or *spending* money, though equally eager in their diametrically opposite pursuit, will start aside from the *direct* road, whenever a temptation is held out, suppose it but in the shape of a feather, should the feather chance to tickle his fancy. To support which proposition I shall bring forward two instances:—*Arthur Isleworth* was stopped on *his* way to New-market, where it was ten to one he might have lost more than he had *to* lose, in less time than he took to indulge himself with the spectacle of two noted bruisers, met to
break

break each other's bones in cold blood, on a match of fifty guineas; and our good merchant, when arrived at his house in Bond-street, was detained from *his* money-getting pursuits on the 'Change by a morning paper that lay on his table—he had not a moment to spare: Lady Isleworth's name, in capital letters, made him forget that he had not a moment to spare, and he read as follows.

“ Splendid preparations are making in
 “ Portman-square, by the supreme direc-
 “ tress of elegance and fashion, *Lady Isle-*
 “ *worth*, to celebrate the marriage of her
 “ eldest son with the only daughter and
 “ heiress of Lord Benvour. Her ladyship
 “ unites to the extremes of wit, personal
 “ charms, and various accomplishments—
 “ a dower of such magnitude as, it may be
 “ presumed, will soon lift her fortunate
 “ husband to a seat in the upper house.
 “ The writer of this article has the singular
 “ pleasure

“pleasure to add, that for expence, taste,
 “and beauty, in the ball to be given on
 “this occasion, Lady Isleworth will find
 “herself, as usual, unrivalled by all her
 “competitors.”

“Astonishing!” cried the exasperated man of business, “Astonishing folly! which vaunteth itself in the *very* face of poverty and contempt! This rascally editor deserves bastinadoing! Such inflammatory paragraphs as these are more efficacious in corrupting the minds of young women than *even* the example of their *own* mothers!” He thought also of his *two* thousand pounds, and calculated how far it was likely they would go to provide for Lady Isleworth’s jubilee. Again remembered he had not a moment to spare—he hastened away to fulfil his engagements on ‘Change.

CHAP. XIX.

STILL MORE CLOSELY CONNECTED WITH
THE TITLE-PAGE.

WHEN last we parted from Sir Frederick Isleworth, he was going with a giddy head and unsteady step towards the carriage, which was to conduct him, if not to the devil, at least into the very path which leads to his dominions.

The ruinous party had assembled before he joined them, yet he was *just* in time to undo himself. Faro being the game, his finances became so mangled between *great* and *little* figure, that, of fifteen hundred he carried out in the evening, he brought back in the morning no more than *one* single guinea, manfully resisting the overtures

tures of despair to stay and witness the funeral obsequies of that one *also*.

As he rolled along the silent streets towards his comfortless home, not knowing what to do with *certain* reflections that threatened to be the companions of his short drive, he reclined his aching head against the side of the chariot, in which position he and they all fell asleep together. *Fancy*, a thousand times more flattering than *reality*, began to make herself very busy in repairing all that was amiss in the affairs of this *great* man: she rehearsed before him a scene very much calculated for his amusement—it was the funeral procession of his aunt Lady Bridget; and at the moment when a thundering rap at his own door forced the magic dame to drop the wand of her enchantments, her inactive victim was in possession of thirty times the sum he had left behind him at the gaming-house.

No more such visions gilded the downy pillow of repose, when, with an agitated mind and gloomy countenance, he sought for them in his own apartment. The goddess of fiction, offended at the little respect he paid to her officious zeal, would not enter any more into his service; for, whilst his valet disrobed him, he vented curses on *all* dreams as well as *dreamers*, amongst which latter number he was not disinterested enough to forget himself. Without dwelling too long on one subject, we shall let Sir Frederick sleep out his nap with what appetite he may, and, with gentle violence, force back the repentant Lord Clarence on the stage of action.

“It was a terrible solecism!” cried the Peer, when the next day he awakened to sense and recollection, “I have certainly *done* myself up with Clarissa for ever! What the devil should give me such an unconquerable *penchant* for shewing myself when drunk,

drunk, to the very people in the world who I would wish to believe me *always* sober! Well, the deed is done, and cannot be undone. I will go and take a peep into the eyes of my mistress; and if I have offended past forgiveness, I turn my back on a family with which, Miss Isleworth excepted, I am not *very* deeply enamoured."

In this accommodating state of mind, Lord Clarence shewed himself in Lady Isleworth's breakfast-room, just as all the party had dispersed themselves, to follow what best suited their inclinations, Lady Ann excepted, who was trying to find out a riddle in the Ladies Pocket-book, the solution of which had occasioned some difficulties, when many heads as wise as her own were united to solve them. She remained alone to receive his lordship; and so artfully managed the opportunity of a

tête-à-tête, that, by passing over the little irregularity of which he professed himself guilty the preceding night, with more *non-chalance* than he thought, or in fact than it really did deserve—by treating his foibles with indulgence, and by magnifying his pretensions to applause, she led him on to search for those *agreements* in herself which, with the eyes of a lover, he had hitherto considered the sole property of but *one* woman in the world, and that woman Clarissa Isleworth.

The more he looked and listened, the more he was confirmed that he had mistaken the object, and that beauty, wit, taste, and goodness, were all centered in the wife of her brother!—Of which truth he became so fully persuaded, that on the entrance of his once adored mistress, he paid his compliments with an air of indifference almost as frigid as her own.

Sir

Sir Frederick, though involved in his own perplexities, and Lady Isleworth, though her head was running round on the pivot of a thousand splendid chimeras, neither of them could help observing one day, and many following ones, that Clarissa lost ground with the Earl, and that Lady Ann engrossed the greater share of his attention. Sir Frederick *said* he would speak to his daughter; Lady Isleworth *talked* of hastening her ball; *and* on this *one* point they were both agreed, *that* his lordship should *not* slip through their fingers, if there was any possibility of holding him fast. Each determined to pursue their own plan in their own way—Sir Frederick to *reason*, and his lady to *dance* the poor Clarissa out of her *prejudices*, for to her shyness was placed the whole crime of her noble lover's desertion.

“Child!” said Sir Frederick, darting a stern and scrutinizing look on the blush-

ing downcast countenance of his daughter, when she obeyed the summons which brought her to his closet, "Child! I command you to tell me, without *prevarication*, what you have done to offend *my* friend Lord Clarence?"

"Me, papa! nothing in the world that I know of. Does his Lordship accuse me of disrespect?"

"No, he does not *complain*; but it is *too* visible to your mother and myself how *much* his behaviour is changed within the last week, and you *must* have been to blame!"

"Dear Sir, what is my fault? or what do you conceive it to be? Pray keep me not in suspense, but *tell* me my errors, and I will *try* to amend them."

"Your

"Your *errors*, indeed! it would be well if you had nothing worse to account for."

"What then is my crime?"

"The crime of disobedience! Know, ungrateful girl! that even in the *lifetime* of the late countess I had *fixed* my mind on your succeeding to *that* station of honor; and, since her death, will you *pretend* not to have taken notice with what *anxiety* I have been *labouring* to bring about this great event? Do you forget, also, with what avidity my Lord was running into *my* toils, before your damned airs of scornful prudery drove him back, and distanced all my views for your establishment? These airs, Madam, you are pleased to call *errors*; I call them *sins*! capital sins against common sense; against *my* interest, and against your *own*. Therefore, I command you to get rid of them as fast as you can,

and reform your manners, or, by ———,” and he swore a tremendous oath—“If I am obliged to look out for another husband for you, it shall not be a young handsome man like Clarence, but I will *force* you into the arms of any old fellow who can serve my purpose, though one half of his limbs should be torn from the weather-beaten trunk, and the other half in a state of dislocation. No answering—no answering!” continued he, raising his voice, as he saw her trying to collect a reply from amongst her ideas, which his violence had unsparingly scattered, “I will hear nothing that you can say in your defence. I tell you again, you *must* have affronted Lord Clarence: so go and dress to the best advantage—*look* tenderly on him—*act* like the rest of your sex—*flirt* with him—lay out new lures to catch his attention—do *any* thing to revive his affection—or dread a father’s displeasure.”

He

He turned upon his heel, flapped the door after him, and left his daughter, not the more in love with Lord Clarence for the sentence she had received at the parental bar of judgment.

CHAP. XX.

WAYS AND MEANS.

DELIGHTED with his newly adopted system of terror, extremely flattering in promise, Sir Frederick left his daughter, and went to seek for his wife, whom he knew he should find at the board of green cloth, amusing Arthur's bride with a little *chicken* picquet, to pass away an idle hour before dressing time.

Lady Ann had just ran off to her chamber in a pretended pet with her bad luck, though, by her own account, her losses were only twenty, and by that of her antagonist no more than ten shillings.

Lady

Lady Isleworth was employing the few remaining solitary moments in telling her own fortune on the cards; she had cut them three times—wished Lord Clarence might *speak out* on the night he was to be the partner of Clarissa at her ball—and the *nine of hearts*, unerring prognostic of success, had actually made its appearance, when the entrance of Sir Frederick called from her this extatic exclamation—"I have got my wish, and Miss Isleworth will soon be Countess of Clarence!"

"Has my Lord," cried her husband, "told you so?"

"Oh no! but here is the *nine of hearts*, and see by what enchanting cards it is every way surrounded!"

Instead of reproving his wife's folly, he gave a new specimen of his own, by sup-
posing

posing she would allow his superiority in planning, when he should have unfolded to her incurious inattentive ear what had just been passing between himself and his daughter.

Lady Mleworth thought of nothing but the critical ball—it must be hastened—that alone could or would ever bring back the retreating lover—dancing exposed a thousand charms, which would otherwise lie concealed, or at least only peep out from behind a veil of awkward reserve to very little advantage. And it was thus she reasoned.

“In the name of nature! my dear, is there a man in the world who can preserve his stoicism when assailed by an host of temptations? The touch of a soft hand—the glance of an eye—the blush of exercise—the graces of attitude—all, all, every thing,

thing, I do *insist* upon it, is in favour of the ball! You cannot dispute it, Sir Frederick!"

At any other time, when he had not wanted her assistance to raise the needful, Sir Frederick would most surely have disputed, but now it became him to be passive, until she began very severely to reprehend him for having treated Clarissa with rigour, "when you know," said she "how much the beauty of her countenance depends on the quantity of animation she may be able to throw into it; and now, since you have talked to her so seriously, I suppose she must be transformed into a perfect Melpomene, or at best a red-eyed Magdalen. However, all may not yet be lost—I shall try, by my indulgence, to restore what you have taken from her."

Sir Frederick, roused to resentment by these illiberal reflections on his understanding,

ing, persisted that his measures were the best. A warm debate ensued; in the very paroxysm of which her ladyship demanded an *immediate* and large supply of cash, that all due *force* might be given to *her* experiment: which demand, so far from building up the breach which a difference of opinion had made between them, was answered only by a *positive* refusal of compliance, leaving the state of their *tempers* in almost as ruinous a condition as their *circumstances*; nor was it till her ladyship had vented in tears and sobs, the most troublesome particles of her passion, that she was capable of devising new *ways* and *new* means to evade the consequences of a disappointment which threatened to destroy the whole of her air-built fabrick,—for *without* money there could be no *ball*, and *without* a ball, she was equally convinced there could be no *possible* way of fixing Lord Clarence.

In this disconsolate humour she went to her dressing-room—shut the door—threw herself down on a rich sofa—and wept bitterly.

On this same luckless morning her ladyship received from Staffordshire two letters; one from a former governess to her children, who, having married a curate, afterwards settled in that county, to whom Lady Isworth, eighteen months before, sent her second and third daughters, both verging on womanhood—not so much for instruction in the whole *duties* of *woman*—not so much with the design of conveying cultivation to those female accomplishments which, some how or other, had been altogether totally neglected—as because, according to her maternal reasoning, and in conformity to the present custom, it was thought best to keep them out of harm's way till their eldest sister had made her market. How convenient—how consistent these

these plans, for the race of existing mothers to adopt! What if so many charming daughters, all produced on the stage of life in the same scene, should not interfere with their own claims to admiration, yet, may they not cross the path of each other's preferment? It is the part of prudent matrons to prevent such misfortunes; and I suppose it to be for this very reason we so often see one of the long brood flying about the world at her own discretion, and hear of half a dozen more, equally capable of the same womanly excursions, who are locked up in their nurseries.

Having introduced the writer of one letter, it is only to be added, that the other came from the pen of Miss Arabella, her ladyship's second daughter, who had just entered into the nineteenth year of her confinement. Let us see, then, if there is to be found, in the contents of either or both of these epistles, anything to exoner-

ate

late Lady Hileworth from the charge of being, like too many of her *sex* and *kind*, put out of humour by trifles even lighter than themselves.

"Honored Madam,

"I think it my duty to inform your

"Ladyship, that the young ladies are in

"want of many things they cannot do

"without, particularly shoes, stockings,

"and petticoats, besides linen of *all* sorts:

"and as to Miss Matilda, she has out-

"grown all her frocks, so that they are

"quite above her knees—two of them

"only are in tolerable repair, the rest, I

"assure your Ladyship, are not fit to be

"seen; so that if I am to be honored with

"the company of the ladies *much* longer, I

"hope your Ladyship will take it into your

"consideration to order them new cloaths

"of every sort.

"I hope

“ I hope also that your Ladyship will
 “ forgive our officiousness, for my husband
 “ and I have procured them a writing-
 “ master, to attend ever since they have
 “ been in the country : to be sure your
 “ Ladyship did not *say* that it should be so;
 “ but then *we* thought it a pity, as Miss
 “ Arabella had got into joinhand before she
 “ came to us, that she should forget all
 “ that had been taught her, for want of
 “ practice.

“ There are now fifteen pounds due for
 “ their teaching; which money Mr. Stan-
 “ dish would be very proud to receive from
 “ your Ladyship, as he has a sickly wife,
 “ and seven small children. I wish it had
 “ been in our power to have paid him
 “ without troubling your Ladyship; but
 “ my *poor* husband, though he serves two
 “ churches, and rides like a post-boy from
 “ one to the other every Sunday, yet his
 “ labours

"labours on horseback and in the pulpit"
 "produce him no more than seventy"
 "pounds a year; which is *all* we have in"
 "the world, except my former *wages*,"
 "which are in your Ladyship's hands, as"
 "well as the hundred and twenty pounds"
 "that you agreed to pay us for the board"
 "of the young ladies, at the rate of forty"
 "pounds a year for each of them.

"We have now had the happiness of"
 "their good company eighteen months;
 "and my *poor* Mr. Trotter, who is more"
 "puzzled in making both ends meet than"
 "in composing a hundred sermons, all fit"
 "to be preached before the bishop, (for"
 "indeed his learning is much greater than"
 "his profit); for these reasons, my Lady,"
 "poor Mr. Trotter would hold himself"
 "everlastingly obliged to your Ladyship's"
 "goodness for the whole, or any part of"
 "the debt due to him: the butcher and"
 "baker have not seen the colour of his"
 "money

“ money since Michaelmas; for that their
 “ bills must be much longer than our
 “ purses, if your Ladyship’s kindness does
 “ not help us out.

“ The young ladies have very charming
 “ appetites; and much good may it do
 “ them!

“ There is a trifle, my Lady, that I did
 “ not wish to communicate, for fear it might
 “ vex your Ladyship; but Mr. Trotter will
 “ have it, that it is his duty and mine to
 “ let your Ladyship into every thing, that
 “ worse may not happen; for, to be sure,
 “ as he says, it would be no desirable
 “ match between the daughter of a baronet
 “ and the son of a farmer.

“ You must know then, my Lady, since
 “ it *must* come out, that Miss Matilda has,
 “ for several weeks, been in an oddish
 “ melancholy sort of a way; her cheerful-
 “ ness

" nefs (for she used to be as merry as a bee)
 " all of a sudden went off, God knows
 " how! and Mr. Trotter observed, that it
 " was likely she might fall into a consump-
 " tion, as she had got a habit of sighing,
 " God knows for what!

" At last Mr. Trotter, who has more
 " penetration than most parsons, threw out
 " some hints to me in confidence, as if he
 " thought Miss Matilda had fallen in love
 " with some body or other; upon which
 " we began to think of all the young gen-
 " tlemen who came to church, or called
 " in at the parsonage: and at first we sus-
 " pected it to be Mr. Ramble, our attor-
 " ney's clerk, because all ladies think him
 " very handsome; but I said, on second
 " thoughts, I did not suppose it could be
 " him, for that Miss Arabella seemed to
 " delight in his company much more than
 " her sister. " Well then," said Mr. Trot-
 " ter, for he hit it off in a moment, " I will
 " be

“ be hanged if she has not a kindness for
 “ young Russell, whose father rents the
 “ great tithes of the vicar.”

“ I wonder I had not thought of him
 “ myself; for now I remembered he was a
 “ more comely youth than Mr. Ramble,
 “ of the same age with Miss Matilda, and
 “ that she was mighty fond of hearing him
 “ play upon the flute. Mr. Trotter told me
 “ he would watch them better in future;
 “ and yesterday, my Lady, he surprised them
 “ walking together, with Mr. Russell’s
 “ arm thrown about Miss Matilda’s waist.
 “ They did not know that any body had
 “ seen them: so, if your Ladyship pleases,
 “ we should be glad not to have *our* names
 “ mentioned as informers, for the young
 “ lady would never forgive us; besides,
 “ the Russells are people of substance, and
 “ our very good neighbours. I remember to
 “ have often heard your Ladyship declare,
 “ that time was more precious to you than
 “ any

“ any thing else : so, begging your pardon
 “ for having taken up so much of it, I re-
 “ main, my Lady, your ladyship’s most
 “ humble and dutiful servant,

“ ALICE TROTTER.”

And what were the emotions that agitated the maternal bosom of Lady Isleworth, on being pretty plainly informed that both her daughters were naked—one of them in love, to a *certainly*, with the farmer’s son—and the other *apparently* ready to form a similar attachment with the attorney’s clerk ?

Why, she betrayed no emotions at *all*, her thoughts being otherwise employed ; and, looking in the glass, just as she had carelessly cast her eyes over Mrs. Trotter’s morsel of eloquence, she saw her woman misplacing her cap, when every thing she possessed of *feeling* was exerted in the re-

primands she bestowed on Harris for her awkwardness, and in disposing the ornament to greater advantage.

The alteration being effected to her entire approbation, her temper returned to its usual placidity, when, leaving the governess's letter open on the toilet, she proceeded to examine the other, which, being from her daughter, was not the first to make a claim on her attention.

The only notice taken of Mrs. Trotter's expostulation, or information, was muttering something about *impertinence* in asking for *cloaths*, when the children were confined in a country place, where they could see *nobody*—besides calling the curate and his wife a couple of fools, for troubling *her* with *their* wise observations on a boy and girl's playful rambles through the fields together,

Miss

Miss Arabella's writing or orthography were neither of them the *most* perfect of their *kind*; yet Lady Isleworth so rapturously admired the spirited composition, that she several times broke out into short plaudits, such as—charming!—how animated!—another self! Then laughing very heartily, she afterwards read aloud the entertaining epistle with which she was so highly diverted, to convince her attendant that the mirth it excited was natural, willing to justify the *effect* by making her a sharer in the *cause*.

Condescensions of this sort were not very unfrequent, and Harris listened with her usual avidity, declaring it was *vastly* fine, *vastly* witty, *vastly* clever indeed! and should have wondered how *so* young a lady could put such things together, if *genius* had not run in the *blood* of the family, *particularly* on the side of her ladyship.

A compliment so aptly conceived met with a gracious welcome, as will, I hope, the bright occasion from whence it originated : but, whilst laying this extraordinary letter before my readers, if mothers, let me caution them not to think less favourable of their own nurselings, though they should not come near the standard of Miss Bell's literary accomplishments ; let them first consider what pretensions they have to expect prodigies in their female issue ? *Rare* *ripes* are not always the produce of attention ; *such* fruit has its seed more generally in *nature*, though it may be forced by education. Let us proceed to the specimen.

CHAP. XXI.

NURSERY WIT IN A YOUNG LADY OF
NINETEEN.

“ DEAR MAMA,

“ **M**ATILDA and I think it very odd
“ that we should be kept here in
“ this nasty, dirty, stupid place, till we are
“ grown almost over the hedges, and nearly
“ as tall as the chimnies belonging to the
“ hut of prim parson Trotter.

“ Indeed it is quite shocking! What
“ does it signify to be women, and pretty
“ women too, if we are for ever to be made
“ obedient to the laws of restraint?—to be
“ treated like mere babies!—to put our
“ hands before us, curtesying every time
“ we come in or go out of the room, with
“ a *Miss* you *must* not do *this*, that, and

K 3

“ the

“ the other ! You never saw any thing,
 “ mama, half so tormenting in all your
 “ life !

“ I am sure, for my part, I would be
 “ glad to exchange situations with Harris ;
 “ for then I should have the pleasure of
 “ looking at you, when I had made you as
 “ fine as a queen ; and afterwards, when I
 “ could see you no longer, nor be enter-
 “ tained by peeping out at the window to
 “ watch all the coaches and chairs that
 “ stop at your door, how delighted I should
 “ be in tumbling over all your charming
 “ new things, and instructing myself in the
 “ latest fashions !

“ Instead of these *diversions*, we are con-
 “ demned, from morning till night, to
 “ the drudgery of working, or reading, or
 “ hearing lectures ; for though the parson
 “ preaches four times on a Sunday, yet he
 “ does not think that enough, but makes
 “ shift

“ shift to snuffle out every day a sort of ser-
 “ mon, for our private edification ; which
 “ there would be no bearing, if Matilda
 “ and I did not contrive to cheat the old
 “ gentleman, by falling asleep in the midst
 “ of his palavering ; then we are made to
 “ kneel down, night and morning, to say
 “ *family* prayers, in a hole of a parlour not
 “ so large as your dinner table, where, to
 “ increase our inconveniencies, a great
 “ staring vulgar maid-servant makes one of
 “ the party—so that when we are all down
 “ I actually have not room to move my
 “ elbows, and if they should grow to my
 “ sides it will be no wonder. Oh ! dear
 “ mama, only think of our condition !

“ Our governess, I believe, does not like
 “ these sort of things any more than *we* do ;
 “ but that does *us* no good, because the
 “ fright of a parson always will have his
 “ own way. She once did go *so* far as to
 “ *insist*, that having Martha in to prayers

“ with Sir Frederick Isleworth’s *daughters*,
 “ was mixing them with very *improper*
 “ company. And what do you think,
 “ mama, was his insolent answer? Truly,
 “ he said, “ whatever *she* might take into
 “ *her* head about distinctions, in perform-
 “ ing our *duties* to God *one* person was as
 “ acceptable as *another*.” Did you ever
 “ hear of such a poor, ignorant, ill-bred
 “ savage, not to know the difference of
 “ *rank*, and rudely to affront one, by say-
 “ ing to one’s face one is no better than
 “ his dirty drab of a servant!

“ Oh, dear!—Oh, dear! what a happy
 “ creature is Clarissa! going about every
 “ where—making conquests every day—
 “ courted by every body—flattered by
 “ every body—and, as you tell me, mama,
 “ just going to be married, to have a *coro-*
 “ *net* on her coach, and to do whatever
 “ she pleases!

“ Now,

“ Now, for my part, mama, I do not
 “ want to be married *immediately*, but I do
 “ very much wish you would send for us
 “ home, that we may be bride maids. Mrs.
 “ Trotter gives me some comfort, by say-
 “ ing it is very likely you will have us to
 “ be present at the ceremony, and that
 “ witnessing Clary’s wedding may be a step
 “ towards our own.

“ Dear, sweet mama! pray take compas-
 “ sion on the dreariness of our dismal pri-
 “ son, or prepare to hear we have hung
 “ ourselves in spite and vexation! Upon
 “ my word, that might have been our fate
 “ long ago, if, amongst the rustics which
 “ form our *monstrous* society, there had not
 “ been two families a *little* better than the
 “ rest—one an attorney, the other a sort of
 “ farmering gentleman.

“ We are all fond of music to distract-
 “ tion; and the *young* folks that belong to

“ the *old* ones, doing what they can to keep
 “ us alive, we have hitherto been prevent-
 “ ed from an act of desperation which your
 “ cruelty, dear mama, will not fail to
 “ compleat. Therefore, pray send your
 “ carriage for us, or order us to come to
 “ town in the stage *immediately*: nay, if
 “ you chuse that I should take the journey
 “ on foot, *even* without shoes, I shall joy-
 “ fully set out on the pilgrimage, and
 “ cripple onward as fast as I can, to prove
 “ how much, dear mama, I am your obe-
 “ dient and dutiful daughter,

“ ISABELLA ISLEWORTH.”

Whatever pleasantry the perusal of this
 witty composition had at first created in the
 ideas of Lady Isleworth, was wholly dis-
 persed in her succeeding interview with Sir
 Frederick—so intirely dissipated, that, after
 having flown from the sight of her barba-
 rous *tyrant*, it was a very long time before
 she could rally her scattered spirits to any
 settled

settled point of contrivance. Now, all good financiers well know, that the head should be *cold*, and the *thoughts* collected, when a national or private debt *must* be contracted, for which the minister, the man, or the woman, has no security to offer.

Reduced to this terrible dilemma, unknowing what to do, which way to turn, or where to look for redress, her distracted ladyship sent down word to her hardly less deranged family, that, being suddenly indisposed, they must sit down to dinner without her.

This message alarmed none of the party except Clarissa, who immediately ran up to enquire what was the matter. She tried the door—it was locked; she asked admittance, but was refused entrance, with an authoritative command that she should directly return to the company, and not

tease a poor invalid with insignificant questions.—Miss Isleworth reluctantly obeyed.

“Well, child, what ails mama?” whispered Lady Ann, seeing Clarissa return so soon, “are we going to have a little brother or sister palmed upon us? or is it only a fit of the vapours?”

“I have not seen my mother,” replied Miss Isleworth, “she is disposed to rest, and I would not disturb her.”

“Oh! you dear little *prude*!” said her gay ladyship, “this caution is even more indefensible than your *step by step* advances to poor Clarence.”

She still spoke in a low tone, but not so low as to prevent his Lordship, now always stationary at her elbow, from hearing himself named; and, catching hold of her hand with

with lover-like gallantry, he swore it should be his prisoner, till he knew how far *he* was concerned in the secret carrying on between her and Miss Isleworth.

"Shall I tell him?" cried Lady Ann, laughing.

"For your *own* sake, I should hope *not*," replied Clarissa, whose complexion had before displayed, on its pure white, the crimson flag of displeasure, and, rising from her seat, she retired to another part of the room, where her father was amusing himself with a book on calculations, chances, and odds.

Lady Isleworth found her conquered spirits considerably reinforced, after eating half a boiled chicken, and drinking three glasses of Madeira. It happened, whilst thus employed, that a lucky expedient crossed

crossed her labouring brain—vanity gave it birth, and necessity nurtured it:—thus it was brought about.

She could not remember ever before to have shed a sufficient number of tears at one time, to convince herself whether the poet's observation, that they are becoming to beauty, extended to her own particular cast of features. To justify her curiosity on this head, she threw her streaming eyes on the dressing-glass, a monitor more *faithful* than *flattering*; she was disgusted with the truths it uttered—she started at the blotted countenance it presented—but more at the inroads which sorrow liquidated had made on the artificial bloom of her complexion.

The rouge was at hand—she hastily repaired the damage her cheeks had sustained—banished care from her mind—and invited

vited smiles to her face, crying out, "How absurd! Can the foe of animation be the friend of beauty?"

A few false gems that sparkled on her bosom next attracted her attention: "Ah!" exclaimed she, "had I but the *substance* in *my own* possession of these paltry shadows, I might still be happy!" It was then that the lucky thought occurred how she might get at the originals, and to what a charming use she might convert them.

Having digested the whole plan, and reassumed her usual gaiety, Lady Isleworth descended from her dressing-room; and, when she joined the festive circle below, was quite as good company as if nothing had happened to disturb her; nor could the nicest observer have distinguished any leading features of gloom, discontent, or resentment, by which to have traced her late *fracas* with Sir Frederick.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXII.

VEXATION ON VEXATION.

NOTwithstanding the total privation of money, every thing went on as swimmingly in Portman-square as if the treasury itself had been opened to supply the wants and wishes of Lady Isleworth, who, at an enormous expence, contrived, by filling her house with dinner and supper parties, to make Lady Ann's confinement at home less insupportable, Sir Frederick having declared it against all *etiquette*, that his daughter-in-law should exhibit *en bride*, until Lord Benvour had sanctified her hasty nuptials, to which event he looked forward with the most sanguine expectation; for, in defiance of their former quarrel on the subject of this union, when only in embryo,

bryo,

bryo, he had himself condescended to mediate between the *offended* and the *offenders*; nor did his Lordship's silence to a very laboured epistle in the least discourage his hopes of a speedy reconciliation.

Already had Arthur Isleworth been absent from town ten days, and no body seemed to regret his desertion less than Lady Ann herself. "What does it signify?" she would say, "Am I *not* married to the man? So whether he is here or there, he *must* drag his chain after him."

Lady Isleworth adored her spirit, but Sir Frederick called it levity. Perhaps this appellation proceeded from the humour of the moment; for at the moment it escaped him various causes had combined to make him see people and things through the medium of fretfulness. His agreeable friend, Mrs. Snug, had *that* morning eloped with a younger man than himself: on *that* morning

ing the member of a body corporate, by whose *influence* or *avarice* he had obtained a seat in Parliament seven years before, came to him, with the mortifying tidings that a weighty opponent was already in the field, and showering gold, like dust, upon the palms of his constituents—observing, that there was no other method of stopping the progress of this new candidate, than by out-doing him in his own way; and concluded with a hint, that a brace of thousands, conveyed, through him, to his brethren of the corporation, might insure his interest. But, had it insured his salvation, Sir Frederick could not have raised the *fine* demanded; no, nor the twentieth part, if one hundred only would have saved him from perdition. He had therefore nothing to give the greedy messenger but *good* words, and nothing to send by him to his brethren but *fair* promises!—a mighty old-fashioned coin, which, in the present age of trifles, loses all pretensions to currency.

Besides

Besides these sources of vexation, another cause had presented itself on the same morning, which filled the Baronet's mind with more inflammable matter than all the rest of his crosses; it was a short answer to a long letter, couched in the following terms.

" SIR,

" I congratulate you and your family on
 " your alliance to the noble house of Ben-
 " vour; and hope the *honor* you may de-
 " rive from the connection will compensate
 " for the inconvenience of being encum-
 " bered with an unmanageable, unportioned
 " young woman of quality. *Your* son has
 " robbed *me* of what I can very well spare,
 " *an* undutiful daughter. I send then nei-
 " ther my blessing nor my curse; but mark
 " me, Sir Frederick, I give *you* this irre-
 " vocable assurance, *that* if a guinea might
 " save your whole race from destruction
 " I would *not* advance it—by my life! nor
 " bequeath

" bequeath it at my death. To-morrow I
 " enter into a second engagement, from
 " which I hope to have children more de-
 " serving of my love than Lady Ann Isle-
 " worth. For the last time, I have the
 " honour to subscribe myself,

" SIR,

" Your obedient servant,

" BENVOUR."

This letter, with many others, had lain
 some hours on the breakfast table, before
 the family assembled themselves together.
 Lady Ann tossed them over one by one,
 and at last came to that which, by the su-
 perscription, she knew to be her father's,
 though, whether intended as a mark of
 contempt, or proceeding from accident,
 he had not stamped the envelope either
 with his name or his coronet.

" Ho, ho!" cried she, " this comes
 from my Lord Huffy Gruffy, and no doubt
 contains

contains an earthquake that will blow us all into the third heaven."

"Is my Lord any relation of your Ladyship's?" asked her mother-in-law; for Sir Frederick had not yet made his appearance, being shut up in another room with his friend the Alderman.

This question had such an effect on the risible faculties of Lady Ann, that, in a fit of laughter, next to convulsive, she shouted out, "Dear Madam! is it possible that you should not understand Huffy Gruffy and Lord Benvour are one and the same person?"

Lady Isleworth broke out into raptures at the explanation, declaring her a first-rate *belle esprit*; and that whether Lord Huffy Gruffy might be kind or cruel, her son Arthur would be sufficiently rich in a wife so highly accomplished, and his family
but

but *too* happy in being allied to *her* graces and *her* talents. "Indeed," added she, "I almost *wish* his lordship may hold back his pardon for a little time, just to give us *all* an opportunity of shewing our perfect and disinterested gratitude."

"Well ; but, my dear Lady Isleworth," replied the wife of Arthur, who sat twisting her father's letter into every sort of form, to get at the contents, "suppose, as we are now all *one* family, and Sir Fredrick not present, do you think he would be *very* angry if I should break the seal, merely to take a *peep* at *my* papa ? for, to tell you the truth, I am really dying with impatience."

"Oh, to be sure !" was the giggling reply, "it is downright impossible he should chide your *amiable* curiosity." Clarissa, on the contrary, used a few unsuccessful arguments, why she ought to suspend her inclination

clination a little longer, offering to go and seek for her father.

“No, no; sit still, child,” said her mother, nor *presume* to check the wishes of your all-charming sister!”

“I would bet this magic bauble,” cried Lady Ann, twirling her wedding-ring on the table, “*she* would not do what I am going to do for the whole universe—open a letter not directed to herself,” and, as she spoke, applied her fingers to the seal; but, before it divided, Sir Frederick shewed himself. “Hush!” she exclaimed, “not a word about my *wicked* intentions.” She then presented it to him, with the wax unbroken—told him from whence it came—and intreated that he would instantly read it aloud, for the edification of *all* whom it might concern.

Her

Her ladyship thus gave him the hardest task he had ever been employed to execute, so busy were his hopes and fears in filling up his harrassed mind with all the rubbish of desperate anxieties. *Should* the Peer be propitious, his son, his fortune, his pending election, *all* would do well; but *vice versa*, and his fine prospects must fall to the ground—his son is ruined, his fortune spent, and his election lost! Is it then a matter of wonder that, as he hastily swallowed Lord Benvour's savoury mess of poison, the very ratbane of his better expectations, his nerves, his sight, his speech should be affected—that his hands should tremble, his eye balls start, and his tongue falter—or that, throwing the letter from him, he should bounce out of the room with quivering lips, and suppressed execrations?

“Why, what is the matter now?” cried Lady Ann, “Sir Frederick seems *prodigiously*

ously dissatisfied! I am confident my father is *much* meeker than I could suppose possible."

"Oh! never mind *Sir Frederick*," replied his lady, "we shall all do 'mighty well *by and bye* :—but, my dear, I hope you have prepared a bridal dress for your appearance on Thursday?"

"Now would I give any thing in the world, *but* my youth and my beauty," said Lady Ann, "to know who it will be."

"Of what are you thinking?" asked Lady Isleworth; "perhaps of the happy man, who will be honored with your fair hand on Thursday?"

"Nothing about it," she replied; "so far from thinking of a partner for myself,

I can only guess—guess—guess, and all to no purpose, who *can* be the *maiden* or the *widow* that consents, at such *short* notice, to lead up the matrimonial dance with my *hobbling* papa?”

“Come, come, be more serious, my little giddy friend,” said the *sage* matron, “his lordship only *threatens*, depend on it; he will never *do* so *silly* an action. I beg you will think no more of it, but answer me *soberly*.”

“Have you chose your colour and your ornaments? for I have told Sir Frederick that *no* power *upon* earth shall make me put off *my* ball.”

“Dear Madam,” returned Lady Ann, shrugging her shoulders, “how should I chuse *silks* or *ornaments*? Why, don’t you know I have not a guinea in the world?”
Arthur

Arthur has taken all the contents of my purse to Newmarket, from whence I expect but a doomsday account of either my *man* or my *money*."

"I beg your pardon," cried the mother of *that* man, "I shall send *my* people of business for your Ladyship's *orders*, and must hold myself for ever disobliged should you spare *any* sort of expence, suited to the daughter of Lord Benvour and the wife of Mr. Isleworth."

Whilst Lady Ann returned thanks for this *very* broad commission, to derange, if *possible*, the family affairs more than they were deranged *before*, she saw, from the window, Lord Clarence, indolently strolling down the square; her hat was on—she invited Clarissa to go out with her, *that* they might *seize* on him before he entered the house, and make him walk with them in the garden. Miss Isleworth would have

disregarded Lady Ann's invitation ; but a look from her mother, indicating that her displeasure would be the consequence of a refusal, made her comply with the unpleasant requisition.

CHAP. XXIII.

FASHIONABLE INVOLVEMENTS CONTRASTED WITH CHEAP LIVING.

LADY ISLEWORTH was, in reality, more hurt than she appeared to be, when Sir Frederick withdrew so abruptly from the breakfast table, not that she *very* much concerned herself about the *occasion* of his displeasure, but, having brought him into good humour, she did not like to see him re-discomposed, having always before her eyes the fear that he might relapse into a fit of obstinacy, become unmanageable, and force her to relinquish the *ball*, now within eight days of completion;—cruel misfortune! the more to be apprehended, because she thought it probable, though extremely silly, that he might conceive

it too great a compliment paid to Lord Benvour, if they should make any *extraordinary* parade on account of *his* daughter. "Heaven help me!" cried she, "if he should take such a crotchet into his head, positively we are all undone!" and away she tripped, to prevent, if possible, the threatened danger.

She found the *dreaded* master of her revels in his study: he was neither reading nor writing, but stretched upon his back at full length, on three stools, which, for the greater bodily ease, he had formed into a sort of sofa—his tortured mind rolling in agony, for which there could be invented no posture of repose—his eyes were closed—his clenched hands rested on his forehead—and, as she entered the room, a groan saluted her ears, which might have been supposed to come from a disconsolate malefactor when taking his last view of the world,

world, followed by an exclamation so furious, as greatly terrified, and had nearly driven her back, without endeavouring to establish her purpose; but it was *too* late—he heard the door open, and demanded who was there?

“It is only *me*,” said his lady, gaining courage. “What, in the name of wonder! Sir Frederick, could make you frighten *poor* Lady Ann, by flying from us in *such* an *unaccountable* manner?”

“*Poor* Lady Ann!” he retorted, lifting himself a little up, and resting on his elbow, “*poor* indeed!—damned *poor*! Arthur has made a fine hand of it!”

“Pish! *you* love to look on the dark-complexioned side of *every* thing: I wish, like *me*, you would think that *all* happens for the best.”

L 4

“And

“ And I wish, *Madam*, you would explain how it *can* be for the best, that *I* and my family should be beggared to maintain the *coquettish* daughter of ——”

“ Hold ! my dear,” cried her ladyship, “ on *this* score I *must* beg leave to interrupt you : Lady Ann is, *without* dispute, the *most* elegant, *most* polite, *most* accomplished woman that *you* or *I* have seen on the town since we were first married.”

Lady Isleworth did not always speak after a pattern ; and she here made use of a phrase seldom coupled with *nobility*. Sir Frederick caught it up with ill-natured spitefulness, and replied, “ I never heard that she had been *on the town*, but her *talents* and her *poverty* may bring her *there* at last, and not a *curse* shall I care ;—let *Arthur* look to *that*.”

“ But

“ But why—why Sir Frederick will you put yourself out of temper for *trifles*? I do protest I have the *highest* opinion of Lady Ann; I am *sure* that she will rank with the very first of *fashionable* wives; and Arthur may be the *happiest* of husbands, if it is not his *own* fault.”

“ Then,” replied he, sneeringly, “ your *hopeful* offspring must be of the camelion breed; for, if he cannot live upon air, he must be as miserable a dog as his father. Harkye, Madam!—if I lose *my* election, as it is ten to one that I shall, having no means left to secure it, my *next* step must be to the Bench.”

“ God forbid !” cried her ladyship, giving her voice the tone of alarm, whilst her face and her smiles retained all their charming store of *nonchalance*, “ If you would be but a *little* more reasonable, I *could* open

such prospects to *your* view as would make you laugh at your own *hysterical* fancies."

"Could any thing excite me to mirth, it would be your folly, my dear. What, pray, is the *raree show* your *ingenuity* has prepared to cheat *me* out of my *senses*? Take care not to awaken my *starved* hopes, unless you have solid food to give them when they *are* roused."

"Well, and so I have:—there is *my* ball!—you know it is only four days to *my* ball!"

"My Lady Hleworth! do you call this *solid* comfort?"

"Undoubtedly! for, if you are not disposed to be pleased with the ball *itself*, yet the consequences!—the *consequences*, my dear, *must* delight you!"

"As

“As how!” said the Baronet, starting on his feet, and running to the window, to look after two handsome horses, led by two grooms round the square. “Curse the scoundrels!—I will send them to the devil, for walking these creatures out of their stable before the sweat can have taken effect!” He rang the bell furiously—gave orders about his horses, as if his mind was engaged on *no* other subject—and then asked his lady, who had not ceased speaking, why she did not proceed?

“I have been talking without being heard. You was so engrossed, my dear, with your grooms and your horses, that you have *not* attended to what I was saying about my Lord Clarence and Clarissa.”

“Do you really and truly believe it will ever be a match?” said Sir Frederick, eagerly: “Let *that* but happen! Clarence is an honest fellow, who will not see me

turned out of my borough for want of money to support my interest! Yet—now I recollect—how came you so *certain* of the matter? Why, it appears to *me*, that Clarence cares for no woman in the world but Arthur's wife!"

"It is *you*, Sir Frederick, who have been mistaken, and *I* am in the right!" She then poured into his greedy ears so pretty a *love-tale*, founded upon misconstruction, and garnished with fable, that she *completely* imposed on his shallow understanding, established her *own* plans, restored him to good temper, and, when he met his family and friends at dinner, he was not the least jocular of the joyous party.

By some chance or other, Lord Clarence, that day, deserted the side of Lady Ann, and seated himself next to Miss Isleworth, who also came in for a large portion of his civil speeches, so that every thing conspired

spired to keep up Sir Frederick's newly acquired spirits; and now he wished for *Thursday* and the *ball* with as much avidity as Lady Isleworth herself. Lord Clarence, it was predetermined, would *then* throw off his mourning for *one* wife, and be the declared candidate for another;—in a few weeks after his daughter would become a woman of quality;—of course, that he should borrow from his lordship five thousand pounds, to ensure his borough:—views so captivating, whether considered in the light of ambition or convenience, completely swallowed all remembrances of past or present difficulties. Even Mrs. Snug was forgotten: so that the three succeeding days galloped along with festive velocity, to overtake those travelling before them with the same post-haste.

That *sweet* luxury of quiet, *that* harmony of *nothings*, which at times and seasons are the happiest moments of *rational* creatures,

creatures, never pervaded the house in Portman-square: *there* all was hurry and riot: dissipation vanquished rest, and sleep could take no revenge on his foes, until they were ran down by fatigue; when, in the full face of day they would submit to *his* fetters, merely to renovate their *tired* nature for *new* midnight orgies.

Arthur, in his long absence, had written no more than one short letter to Lady Ann, in which he told her *all* his money was gone—*that* she must set about squeezing *new* supplies out of the *old* Peer—*that* the meeting would be over in two days—*that* he should then leave Newmarket on a shooting party—*that* he could not positively say when he should return home—but hoped she would mean time *divert* herself with *his* mother and *her* visitors; which charge she did not find it in her inclinations to treat with neglect.

The

The project of recovering her jewels, which engendered on the turnabout brain of Lady Isleworth, as she surveyed their representatives in her dressing-glass, was now settled into a regular system, of swindling what she still considered as *her* property out of the usurer's hands, by whom they were detained for value received. She knew him to be a man as steady to his hours of *doing* business, as *invariably* fixed in the habit of always *doing* it to his *own* advantage. The transactions of the day constantly ended with him at nine in the evening: her ladyship therefore called at his door when sure that he would be at home and disengaged.

Mr. Bateman received her with an austerity of countenance, unlike the smiles of pleasure that used to *gladden* his canvas-coloured face on former *confidential* interviews.

He

He was smoking his little dry figure by the side of two sticks and a coal, the chimney being curiously constructed to prevent the waste of fuel—his shrivelled limbs were wrapped in a dirty flannel gown, and his shaking head enveloped with a red worsted night-cap.

Such was his situation—*such* his appearance, when Lady Isleworth, who would not have her arrival announced, followed a boy, as much in dishabille as his master, to the *sanctum sanctorum* of her prudent trustee.

The heedless unconcern of her first *entré* lost somewhat of its original ease, at finding herself very ceremoniously accosted with—

“ Well, Madam, are *you* come to tell *me* that I am as great a fool in *your* opinion as I am thought to be by *your* husband ?

Are

Are you come to draw *my* teeth?—that is, Do you mean to persuade *me* out of the only security I have for the *vast* sums of money my *good nature* has supplied you with? I ask *you*, my Lady, if, *like* Sir Frederick, *you* expect I shall resign *my* trust to what yet remains *unconsumed* of my old friend your father's *hard* earned, *ill* spent riches? I tell you, my Lady, I will do no *such* thing! So I wish your Ladyship a very good night. I have got a cold, and am going to bed—so I say I wish you, my Lady, a *very* good night!”

Lady Isleworth had been silent to the end, that she might collect all her rhetoric into one point of eloquence, with which to combat his *unpromising* suspicions. She listened till he had done, without once interrupting his *angry* salutation, or his *more* angry adieus. But, seeing him about to shuffle out of the room, exerting herself to detain him, she explained the nature of
Sir

Sir Frederick's visit so much to her own advantage, as to make her interest with the *cent per cent* miser stronger than ever.

It was now that confidence took place of distrust. Her eyes flashed good humour—her tongue was oiled with complacency—till she had actually talked him so much out of his senses, that, before they parted, she prevailed over his caution to trust her with her own jewels, to decorate, as she said, the person of Miss Isleworth, for *one night only—the night of nights!—the night of her grand gala!* but under promise to have them delivered up the *very* next morning, which he calculated would be about eight and forty hours that these dear deposits would be out of his *own* possession; for which indulgence he accepted the *small* premium of fifty pounds, another debt to be added to her already prolific list of obligations.

Never

Never did *woman* make a better bargain, or *man* a worse : yet both had their ends, and both were equally satisfied.—The *taker-in* departed under the happiest of certainties, carrying with her the valuable cargo of her earthly treasures ;—the *taken-in* remained behind, to grin at his *imaginary* good luck, and to hug himself on the *probability* that this might not be the *last* occasion she would have for the use of her jewels.

Besides the natural suggestions of an extortioner, he entertained others of a *domestic* nature—one advantageous to the *increase*, and one to the *security* of his wealth.

The jewels had been borrowed for the express purpose of giving splendor to Miss Isleworth's appearance, and promoting her marriage with Lord Clarence ; and Bateman desired any body's alliance with that *ruined* family, rather than it should be united

united to his *own* : and, for reasons *then* only known to himself, but which we are *now* going to lay before our readers, he *heartily* wished success to her ladyship's undertaking ; he would have done more—he would have *given* it all the support in his power, *money* excepted.



END OF VOL. I.

